THE CLAPBOARD TREES PARISH

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A HISTORY

OF

THE CLAPBOARD TREES

OR

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DEDHAM, MASS.

NOW THE UNITARIAN PARISH, WEST DEDHAM

1736 1886

BY

GEORGE WILLIS COOKE

RECENTLY MINISTER OF THE PARISH

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PREFACE.

THE four sermons delivered in January and June, 1886, have now been entirely rewritten and the matter rearranged. The parish records have been carefully studied, and what is of interest in their contents is here reproduced. The town records, as well as those of the first and second parishes and the Baptist church and society, have been also made use of, whenever possible. The aim has been to save from destruction whatever can have any value in connection with the history of the parish. When the Clapboard Trees parish records have been copied, the original spelling and phraseology have been retained; but no attempt has been made to copy the minute details of the town and second parish records. The illustrations have been introduced with the hope of adding to the interest of the volume. The picture of the Summer Street house is a very good reproduction of a slight sketch made by Dr. Francis Howe. The plot of 1754 and the map of 1807 are from rude outlines found among the parish papers. The picture of the meeting-house is after a pen-sketch made from a photograph. It may be added that these pages have been written for those who live or have lived in the parish, and who have again and again talked over the incidents in this history. The following letter explains why these pages appear in print:—

WEST DEDHAM, April 25, 1887.

REV. GEORGE WILLIS COOKE:

Dear Sir,— At a very full meeting of the members of the congregation of the Third Parish, held yesterday after morning service, it was unanimously *voted*,—

"That the thanks of the congregation be extended to our pastor for the able discourses preached by him in commemorating our one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, and that a Committee of three be appointed to request a copy of these historical sermons for publication."

In accordance with the above vote, the undersigned were appointed as that Committee; and we take pleasure in sending you a record of the action of the meeting and to ask of you to furnish a copy of the historical discourses for

publication. Allow the Committee to add their belief that the society as well as many strangers interested in this old parish were much pleased by the careful and able manner in which you had "searched the records" in the preparation of these sermons. Some misunderstanding between us seems to have thus far prevented your acting in this matter, but the Committee feel it is not too late to act now; and especially, in view of the publication of the addresses at Dedham's anniversary last September, it is desirable that our history be printed. The Committee desire to co-operate with you in any way you may suggest. Awaiting your reply, we are yours sincerely,

JAS. M. ELLIS,
ERASTUS E. GAY,
MARY E. FISHER,
Committee of Third Parish.

POSTSCRIPT.— Since the following pages were in type, additional information about the Rev. Andrew Tyler has been found in the *Genealogy of the Richards Family*, compiled by the Rev. Abner Morse, the substance of which has been given in a paragraph on page 43, at the risk of its conflicting with other statements in the same chapter. The same work gives additional information about Dr. Joseph Richards. In George L. Hosmer's *Historical Sketch of the Town of Deer Isle, Maine*, will be found an account of Joseph, Belcher, and George Tyler, who settled in that town.

The portrait of Warren Colburn has been kindly furnished free of charge by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the publishers of his *Intellectual Arithmetic*, a work now used in a majority of Massachusetts towns.

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THE CLAPBOARD TREES PARISH.

I.

FORMATION OF THE PARISH.

NOTHING of thrilling interest can there be in the history of a quiet country parish,—only the simple story of lives faithfully lived and God truly served. When we remember, however, the influence of the New England meeting-houses in developing the character of her people and in fostering the spirit of liberty, even one of the most unpretentious of them obtains a new significance. At the present time, when there is a great interest in everything that has a history, it may not be out of place to consider the doings of a country parish through a century and a half. The growing interest in every phase of the history of our country is full of promise, for the life of the present is the product of the life of the past.

No myths and traditions of a primeval time cluster about the origin of our country, and there are no legends of chivalry and romance anywhere along its annals. It is all plain history from first to last, with only here and there a bordering touch of sentiment and poetry. The history of a people struggling for liberty and equal rights, however, is never one that can be uninteresting to those who love their fellow-men. When that struggle is for freedom of soul and for manly independence, every phase of it is written with promise. It is well, therefore, that we should be curious about the simple history of the religious, political, and social life that has been forming on this continent during the last two centuries and a half. The more carefully

we study it in the light of the growing spirit of mental and political liberty, the more cause shall we have to admire it and to believe it providential.

The history of a country parish in New England to those who now compose it is a history of their ancestors. From the first settlement of the Clapboard Trees parish to the present time, the same names constantly appear. Nearly every one of the first settlers now has descendants living in the parish. If the homely facts set down in the parish records can have little interest for whoever is concerned only with the large events and ideas that affect mankind, not so with those who care for the names of the persons from whom they are descended. The lives of men are not made up from great events, but from the small concerns of the home and the routine of daily vocations. In the homes, the schools, and the meeting-houses of Massachusetts, the simple, sturdy, and true life of its people has been developed. It cannot be out of place, therefore, to look on any spot where that life is in the process of formation, and see how it goes on.

Nearly fifty years passed, after the settlement of Dedham in 1636, according to Mr. Thacher, before any effort was made to settle the western part of the town. The causes lay in the necessity for a compact settlement so long as there were any threatenings from the Indians, and in the desire that each community should be within reach of a very strict government. The earliest mention of this part of the town is an entry in the town records of 1640, when a grant of land in Rock Meadow was made to the Rev. John Allin, the first minister of the town; and it would seem that other persons had already located land in that vicinity. In 1663, Nathaniel Colburn received a grant of land at Pond Plain; and Joseph Ellis one on Fox Hill in 1694. It is probable that the first house was built not far from 1675 or 1680, for the first of these dates would agree with the statement made by Mr. Thacher. In 1682, the town made a rule that no one was to remove to a greater distance than two miles from the meeting-house without a special license; and this

would indicate that such removals had been made or were contemplated. At about this period, the houses of the first inhabitants of the town began to decay; and there was a necessity for building new ones. The tendency was, as this occurred, for the sake of more land to remove farther from the meeting-house to the farms which had been already improved in the western part of the town.

At a meeting of the selectmen, held Dec. 31, 1663, they decided to lay before the next town meeting the following proposition: "It is agreed to propose to the town that the proprietors in the clapboard trees would renew their lines some time this winter." This would indicate that the hill where the meeting-house has always been located was already granted to different persons, who made use of it for the cutting of the timber growing there. The name Clapboard Trees had probably come into use even earlier, and was derived from the character of the timber growing on the spot. On the first settlement of the town, clapboards had been of great value; and, as new houses were being built, they were in constant demand. A saw-mill was built at an early day in the vicinity of what is now Ellis Station. In time, the whole western part of the town was known as the Clapboard Trees; but later this name has been applied only to the hill and the region eastward of it.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a considerable number of houses had been built in the western part of the town. From time to time, roads were laid out and built; but no other mention of it is made in the town records until the inhabitants were numerous enough to wish to have a meeting-house and religious services of their own. In the spring of 1717, a proposition was before the town to free those living in the southern part of the town from paying the ministerial tax; and it is probable that those asking this favor were already having preaching of their own somewhere in the neighborhood of the "old saw-mill," near the present site of Ellis Station on the New York & New England Railroad. For more than a dozen years the agitation for better religious accommodations was continued by the

people of this part of the town, and it is quite certain that they had preaching among them as early as 1722. They asked to be set off into a separate precinct or parish, to have the meeting-house removed nearer the centre of the town or to have two ministers supported by the town. The town would not accept either of these three propositions; but it did give permission that preaching should be had, and it freed those attending it from the customary tax. The town records contain the following concise and expressive accounts of what was attempted and the results: —

May 13, 1717.— It was further proposed if it be the mind of the town that the estates of the persons at the old saw mill and other person's estates living five miles from the meeting-house shall be assessed to the minister's salary freeing them of their head money, provided they pay their head money to the place where they constantly hear and being under the hand of the receiver that they hear some one. Voted in the affirmative.

March 7, 1721.— This day the inhabitants of this town living at or near the old saw mill did present their petition to the town desiring the town to free them from paying to the minister in this town in order to have preaching amongst themselves. Voted in the negative.

May 15, 1721.— This 15th day of May several of the inhabitants of the southerly part of this town did present a petition to the town desiring the town to set them off from the northerly part of this town in order to be a township among them. Non concurence.

March 6, 1722.— This day some of the inhabitants of the southwestwardly part of this town did present a petition to the town desiring the town to set them off as a township or precinct.

This day also the inhabitants of the clapboardtrees and other inhabitants of this town did present a petition to the town desiring to have the meeting house removed or to be set off as a township or precinct.

April 17, 1722.— This day the inhabitants of the south part of this town at or near the old saw mill presented a petition to the town desiring to be set off from this town as a township or a precinct. It was proposed to the town whether it be their mind to free from paying to the ministry here for the present such inhabitants as live from the town beyond Hawses Brook, and shall agree and do their part with rest of the mentioned inhabitants to obtain and maintain preaching amongst themselves. Voted in the affirmative.

It was further proposed to the town to choose a committee to consider the petition of some of the inhabitants for a township or precinct at or near the old saw mill, and to view where may be the most proper

place for bounds if they judge it necessary to make report of the whole to the town at their next general meeting. Voted in the affirmative; and the committee chosen by vote were Capt. Jeremiah Fisher, Lieut. John Metcalf and Lieut. Ebenezar Woodward.

October 14, 1723.— Samuel Dexter called to be the minister. Joseph Ellis, Jr., Jonathan Onion, John Gay, John Richards, Ebenezar Fales and Lusher Gay did not consent to the vote of the town to grant Mr. Dexter an hundred and fifty pounds settlement.

May 15, 1724.— It was also put to the town whether it be their mind to grant the petition of several of the inhabitants at or near the old saw mill, that they might have a township. Voted in the affirmative.

May 10, 1725.— It was put to the town whether it be their mind to grant the first part or paragraph in a petition of some of the inhabitants on the southerly part of the town so far as to free them from paying for the maintenance of the ministry in this town from this time, such of them as have usually attended the public worship of God there, to free them for this present year. Voted in the affirmative.

March 6, 1727.— This day there being a petition from the westerly part of the town, it was proposed to the town whether they would consider of the said petition until the town meeting in May, and passed in the affirmative.

This day the town was served with a copy from the General Court of a petition from the southerly part of this town and from the westerly part of the town of Stoughton.

It is this day put to the town whether they will choose a committee to draw up an answer to the copy of the petition from the Court of the southerly part of this town. Passed in the negative.

It was also this day put to the town whether they will leave the consideration of the copy of the said petition until the town meeting in May. Passed in the Negative.

It was this day put to the town, whether they would reconsider the two last votes with respect to the copy of the petition. Answered in the affirmative.

It was this day put to the town whether they would choose a committee to consider of the copy of the petition from the Court of the southerly part of this town to give their reasons to the town at our meeting in May next why the petition should not be granted. Voted in the affirmative. The committee chosen was Capt. Jeremiah Fisher, Lieut. John Metcalf, Lieut. Ebenezar Woodward.

May 10, 1727.— It was this day put to the town to hear some proposals from sundry of the inhabitants of the southerly part of this town to see if the town can come into some good agreement: first, either to maintain two ministers at the charge of the whole town; this was answered in the negative. Secondly, as to remove the meeting house more into the center of the town than where it stands. This was answered in the neg-

ative. Thirdly, whether they would leave the determination of the said proposals to a committee of disinterested men. This was answered in the negative.

July 31, 1727.— It was this day put to the town whether they would grant the first paragraph in the copy from the Great and General Court of a petition from the southerly part of this town, namely, to be set off in order to a distinct precinct. This was answered in the negative.

It was also put to the town whether they would remove the old meeting house more into the center of the town than where it now stands. This was answered in the negative.

It was further put to the town whether they would choose a committee to show cause to the Great and General Court the next session, on the first Friday of the said session, why the petition should not be granted. Answered in the affirmative; and the committee chosen was Thomas Fuller, William Bullard, and Lieut. Joshua Fisher.

November 8, 1727.— It was also this day put to the town whether they would repeal the vote entered in this book in the year 1717 with respect to the freeing the heads of such persons from paying to the minister's salary as live five miles from the meeting house. This was passed in the negative.

Failing to secure what they had so persistently asked for, the discontented part of the town sent to the General Court a petition stating the difficulties under which they labored, owing to the distance they were from the meeting-house, and asking that a new precinct be created for their benefit or that the meeting-house be more centrally located. A committee was appointed, which reported July 4, 1727, as follows:

That viewing the situation, and considering the circumstances, are of opinion that it will be inconvenient to grant the prayer of the petition at present; but for as much as it appears to the committee that the major part of the petitioners labor under great difficulties in the winter season, in attending the Public Worship of God, by reason of their distance from the Meeting-House, the Committee propose that the Public Worship of God be performed by a Minister, to be provided by the petitioners, in some private house, as near the center as may be, for five months in the year, viz., November, December, January, February and March, and that there be allowed thirty shillings per Sabbath for the said service, the charge to be borne by the whole Town, and to continue until the further order of the Court.

Not securing the aid of the General Court in their effort to obtain a new precinct, the agitators for a division of the par-

ish renewed their efforts before the town meeting, as the following entries on the town records will show: —

May 13, 1728.— It was proposed to the town whether they would grant money for the support of preaching in the southerly part of the town, according to the act of the Great and General Court; and this vote passed in the affirmative.

It was put to the town whether they would remove the meeting house more into the center of the town than where it now stands, to accommodate the whole town except in Springfield corner; and this passed in the negative.

It was this day put to the town to know if it be the mind of the town to grant the petition from some of the southerly part of the town to be set off a distinct precinct or township, according to the bound set in said petition in order to join with a part of the town of Stoughton; and this vote passed in the negative.

September 2, 1728.— It was this day put to the town if it be the mind of the town to grant the petition which was brought by some of the southerly part of the town to set them off a township according to the petition, provided that Stoughton will set off the westerly part of that town to join with them; and this vote passed in the affirmative.

December 2, 1728.— It was this day put to the town whether it be the mind of the town to erect a meeting house for the public worship of God where it may best accommodate the said town of Dedham in general, excepting Springfield inhabitants and that neighborhood, who may be exempted from the charge of the same; and this vote passed in the negative.

May 12, 1729.— It was put to the town to know their mind whether the money granted by the town in May the 13th, 1728, to support preaching in the southerly part of Dedham was intended for more than one year. Passed in the negative.

It was put to the town to know whether it be their minds to come into any measures more than they have done for the release of such families as live remote from public worship in Dedham. Passed in the negative.

It is evident that by this time a good deal of feeling had been stirred up, and the town was as persistent in rejecting the demands of the people of the proposed new parish as they were in pressing its claims. All the propositions presented to the town being rejected, resort was had once more to the legislative power.

Petitions were presented to the General Court by Joseph Smith, John Everett, Samuel Guild, Jonathan Battleson,

also by John Dean and others, Samuel Bullard and others, James Fales and Ebenezer Healey, asking that a parish be formed out of the southern part of Dedham and the northern part of Stoughton. The committee to whom these petitions were referred reported that they had viewed the ground, and they made the following recommendation in favor of a division: —

We humbly are of opinion that it be made into a distinct township, the bounds of the whole to be as follows: beginning at a place called Purgatory on Neponset River, where it may most conveniently take the house and home lot of Josiah Fisher, Junr. from thence to a place called the cross ways, taking in the house and home lot of John Hawes, from thence so as to take in the house and home lot of Lusher Gay, from thence so as to take in the house and home lot of John Baker, from thence to the line for the precinct at Springfield, so as to take in the house and home lot of Amos Fisher, thence by the said line to Bubbling Brook, from whence to Walpole line and by the said line to Traphole Brook and by the said brook to Neponset River and by the same to the first mentioned station; and that the petitioners have leave to bring in a bill accordingly. And, whereas, there has been and still remains an unhappy difference among the inhabitants about the placing an house for the public worship of God, it is therefore humbly proposed that the said House be ordered in such place and time as a committee of this Court shall appoint, so as to accommodate the inhabitants of Dedham and all the inhabitants of this proposed town.

This report was acted upon during the session, and the new parish was established by law. In the mean time, the effort to secure justice at the hands of the town meeting was continued. Even after the new precinct was established, the subject was discussed; but all propositions looking to a continuation of the old relations were negatived. The following are the concluding entries on the town records: —

March 2, 1730.— It was put to the town whether they will grant thirty pounds to the inhabitants of the southerly part of Dedham in order to the maintaining preaching with part of Stoughton among themselves. Passed in the negative.

It was put to the town whether they will remove the meeting house more into the center of the town. Passed in the negative.

It was put to the town whether they will maintain two ministers at the charge of the town out of one box or treasury. Passed in the negative.

It was put to the town whether they will maintain two ministers at the town charge, exempting Springfield from the charge. Passed in the negative.

May 11, 1730.— It was proposed to the town whether they would grant the petition of some inhabitants of this town that the town would build a new meeting house near the midway between where the meeting house now stands and the cross ways at John Hawses. It passed in the negative.

It was also proposed to the town whether they would free the inhabitants of the southerly part of the town who usually meet at Nathaniel Guild's house paying the ministers rate in the town this present year. It passed in the negative.

April 14, 1731.— It was put to the town if they would make null and void a vote of the town passed Sept. 2, 1728, setting off a part of Dedham to join with a part of Stoughton for a township. It passed in the negative.

May 12, 1731.— Upon the desire of a number of the free holders of the town set forth in the warrant for the meeting it was put to the town (1) if they would reconsider and make null and void a vote of the town passed September 2, 1728, setting off a part of this town to join with a part of Stoughton to be a township; passed in the negative; (2) or else if it were the mind of the town to congregate together in the most convenient place therefor, this passed in the negative; (3) if it were the mind of the town that the greatest number that can agree and unite in a place to build a second meeting house and settle a minister and maintain preaching they and all that shall see cause to join in said good work shall be freed from any ministerial charge in any other part of the town: voted in the negative.

II.

LOCATING THE MEETING-HOUSE.

THE order of the General Court creating the new parish or precinct was passed Oct. 8, 1730; and the first legal meeting was held October 22 at the house of John Ellis, near the present Ellis Station. This house was selected as a place for holding the parish meetings, and for the Sunday services of the parish, probably because it was a tavern and afforded the necessary room for these purposes. At this meeting, John Everett was chosen moderator; James Fales, Jr., clerk; and John Everett, James Fales, Jr., and Ebenezer Healey, assessors. November 8, another meeting was held at the house of Nathaniel Guild, who lived near the site of the present Orthodox church in Norwood, when fifty pounds were voted for preaching, and a committee appointed to secure a minister for six months. The meetings were to be held for three months at the house of John Ellis, and for three at that of Nathaniel Guild, if it could be procured; if not, for the whole six months at the house of John Ellis. It was also proposed to build a meeting-house at the centre of the parish, to be forty feet in length, thirty-six in width, and twenty feet stud or thereabouts. At a meeting held Jan. 20, 1731, it was voted to procure a surveyor to ascertain the centre of the parish; and a committee was appointed to buy boards, shingles, and clapboards. Although the centre of the parish was ascertained, which was probably a little south of the present Clapboard Trees church, and the work of building a meeting-house begun, not all the people were by any means satisfied with the location. The differences of opinion led to the holding of a meeting in May, when it was decided to have "a loving conference" together June 7. Then it was thought best to leave the decision as to

the location to the General Court. A committee of the General Court accordingly viewed the situation, and made report that "the people were very unsatisfied among themselves as to a place for the meeting-house to stand on." The parish had as many as five places under consideration,— "Onion's knowl, Onion's bars, ye southerd corner of ye field call ye rye field, ye south end of ye common land lying between John Cobb's and Doctor Richard's, and ye place where it now stands, according to ye agreement." At a meeting held June 21, at the request of the committee of the General Court, the parish voted to build on the south end of the common land; and this place was recommended by the committee and ordered by the General Court. A location having been decided upon, a change of opinion seems to have taken place; and, at several meetings held during the summer and autumn, it was voted not to build upon this spot. An attempt was made to give up preaching services until the question of location was finally decided, but this was voted down by the parish. September 6, it was again voted to build on the common land, and a committee of two was appointed to purchase the frame of a meeting-house standing near the houses of Jonathan Onion and Joseph Ellis, if it could be had on reasonable terms, and remove it as soon as possible to the common land. In October, this action was negatived; and it was decided not to raise the three hundred pounds already voted. December 1, the parish met at the meeting-house near the house of Joseph Ellis, and voted "that preaching be performed in this house ye next quarter of a year ensuing ye date hereof." March 20, 1732, a committee was appointed to build a meeting-house on the site selected by the General Court. At a meeting in July two other locations were voted on; but no action was taken. Dec. 5, 1732, the parish met at the house of Nathaniel Guild.

It was put to vote if it be ye mind of ye precinct to grant ye sum of one hundred and twenty pounds of money to support preaching in said precinct for one full year from ye date hereof, that is, such a part of ye time in ye House near ye house of Joseph Ellis in said precinct and no

longer than such time as ye house near ye house of Benjamin Fairbanks dwelling house set up by James Fales, Junr., Simon Pettee, Ebenezer Dean and Ebenezer Healy be inclosed and a floor be laid down in it, then ye remainder of ye year that preaching be performed in ye house last expressed, and to choose a committee to procure a minister, and voted in the affirmative.

This location was on what is now Prospect Street in Norwood, near Nahatan Street, to the west. Succeeding this, an effort was made to purchase the house near Joseph Ellis, and to use it in completing this house. The General Court was also asked to negative its former decision and to approve of the Fairbanks house.

A majority of the parish being favorable to the house near Jonathan Fairbanks's, meetings were held there, and an effort was made to establish that as the permanent location. The people at the Clapboard Trees were not satisfied with this action, and carried the question to the General Court. Two meeting-houses had been erected in the parish: one near the house of Joseph Ellis, in 1731; and one near the house of Jonathan Fairbanks, in 1732. Although these houses were less than half a mile apart, they did not equally accommodate all the people of the parish; and each locality had its merits to those who lived nearer to it than to the other.

The building of two meeting-houses indicates a strong feeling on the part of the people, and a determination to be accommodated in regard to location. As the precinct could not have two churches, and no compromise being possible, it was necessary to ask for a decision from the General Court. When that body was appealed to, it sent out another committee, which recommended a division of the precinct. According to this decision, made in April, 1734, Joseph Ellis, the two Fishers, Aaron Ellis, and others, resident at the Clapboard Trees, with their estates, were "laid back to the old parish"; while the remainder were formed into the south precinct, which, at a meeting held Feb. 9, 1735, voted money for the settlement of the Rev. Thomas Balch and a salary of one hundred and twenty pounds.

Eight persons protested against this action, on the ground that they were under engagement to a minister already settled in the Clapboard Trees parish; and these persons were, by the action of the General Court, connected with that parish at their request.

The General Court was quite in error, if it thought this arrangement would cause the difficulties to cease. The inhabitants of the Clapboard Trees were not better situated than at first, and they had no purpose whatever of going back to the first parish. What they wanted was a meeting-house of their own, within easy distance of their own houses; and this they were determined to get as soon as possible. Not only was the distance from the old meeting-house objected to, but there were other causes of dissatisfaction. The minister in the first parish at that time was Samuel Dexter, who was extremely puritanical and ascetic, and who was possessed with little of the spirit of toleration. The first parish was torn with dissensions, and it was in a constant agitation from those who would not submit to its discipline. Some of the inhabitants in the Clapboard Trees remained away from the communion service, and for this they were cited before the church. One or more of the others were guilty of contentious acts, which led to much controversy and the calling of a council. All these causes had the effect of agitating the people and of making them more resolute for having a meeting of their own.

At the very next meeting of the first precinct, after the people in the Clapboard Trees had been returned to it by order of the General Court, held May 14, 1735, an effort was made to obtain permission to worship in the Clapboard Trees meeting-house. The action taken is thus recorded on the first parish records: —

> Voted, if it be the mind of the precinct to give them consent that such and no more of this precinct as now meet at the meeting house near Jonathan Onion's may enjoy Gospel ordinances there. This passed in the negative.

In September of the same year, another effort was made to obtain permission to legally use the meeting-house they had

built, this time asking that two ministers be supported by the parish. The vote is reported as follows: —

A request of the inhabitants of the place called Clapboard Trees desires they might be dismissed from paying anything to the support of the Revd. Mr. Dexter, or otherwise to raise the taxes for the support of both ministers upon the whole precinct. The Society by their vote declared for the negative.

In the mean time, a minister had been secured for the Clapboard Trees meeting-house. Having a minister settled among them, and preaching to them every Sunday, was likely to help their cause, at least with the General Court. They also brought their demands before the first church, asking for a dismission to form a new church in their own neighborhood. The action of the church can be best understood in the words of its own records: —

May 18th, 1735.— A letter was communicated to the church signed by eight of the brethren who dwell in or near that part of the town called Clapboard Trees, the purport of which was to signify to the Church their intention to be embodied into a separate Church state, and to desire a dismission for that purpose; and that the Church by the Elder and Messenger would assist them in the performance of said service, and in the installment of the Revd. Mr. Dwight over them as Pastor.

Upon which the following vote was taken: —

Brethren, if it be agreeable to you to give a dismission to our brethren Thomas Herring, Nathanael Gay, Jonathan Onion, Lusher Gay, Daniel Fisher, John Bracket, Joseph Ellis and Ebenezar Kingsbury in order to their being gathered into a Church state separate from us — as they have signified it to be their desire in a written instrument which hath now been read to you — please to signify it by your uplifted hands. Passed in negative.

After which it was signified to the Church that their having negatived the first request, rendered it needless to offer to them the second; and it was farther signified to the Church that it was expected that the brethren would prosecute the separation from us, and the intended installment. For which purposes they might have a Council on the spot the next Wednesday.

The church then voted to appoint a committee, consisting of the pastor, the deacons, and three others, to give their reasons to the churches for refusing to dismiss the members

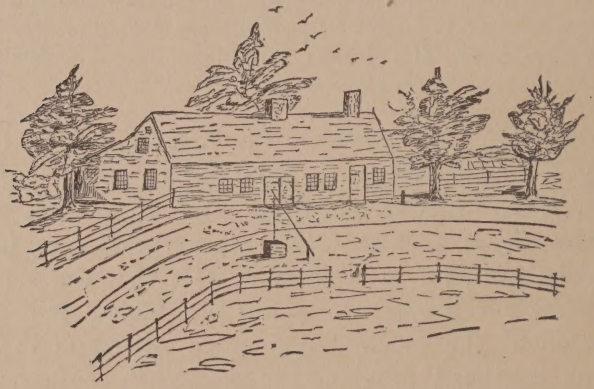
living at the Clapboard Trees to form a new church. The reasons presented by this committee are not given in the church book. Five days later, the church decided not to send delegates to the ecclesiastical council held in the Clapboard Trees meeting-house; but in June the action then taken was recorded in these words: —

> A Council of five Churches, viz., the Church of Medfield, the Church of Brookline, the Church of Hingham, the Church of Milton, and the Church of Natick, convened at the Clapboard Trees upon the request of the Brethren petitioners for a dismission; and on the 4th of June they embodied them into a distinct and separate Church, excepting John Gay, who is continued under the administration of our Church, and Ebenezar Kingsbury, who belongs to the South Church; and four others, that were not in Church fellowship, were allowed to embody with those Brethren; viz., Maj. Joseph Ellis, John Baker, Benjamin Fairbanks and John Richards.

In regard to the action of the first church in calling several of its members to account for not attending communion, it is to be remembered that they lived at the Clapboard Trees, and that they were seeking to form a church of their own. It cannot be said that the action of either party to this controversy was justifiable. It is a good illustration of the constant difficulties arising in the New England churches throughout the eighteenth century, owing to the repressive spirit which sought to keep men within the closest bounds. Every act of men was brought under the scrutiny of church or town authorities, and they were subjected to very exacting regulations. At this very time, the selectmen in Dedham were in the habit of ordering all persons coming into the town to leave it at once, if they had any thought they were not of good character or incapable of supporting themselves. This disposition to suppress independent action was galling to many, and was not easily submitted to by not a few. The spirit of political and religious independence was growing, and manifested itself in many ways.

Another source of difficulty in this case, as in many others at this time, was the connection of Church and State.

The churches were supported by the towns; and a tax was levied on all persons living in the town, as in the case of other taxes. Not only was this the case, but persons not attending church were fined. These regulations had already begun to be a source of trouble, for there was an increasing number of persons who felt them to be oppressive and unjust. As in the present case, they helped to create hard feeling, to make one party oppressive and the other contentious and rebellious, and to rend the churches with the bitterest controversies about matters of trivial importance. On the one hand was felt the need of a strong rule



WHERE DR. CUTLER PREACHED IN 1731.

in behalf of purity and good order, and on the other was manifested a growing spirit of manly independence. Both were right, but they were not brought together in the best manner.

It has been stated by some of those who have written on the early history of the western part of Dedham, that the first religious services held in that part of the town were after the order of the Church of England, and were conducted in the house of Joseph Smith, on what is now Summer Street, in 1731. It is quite certain that those church services were not the first gatherings for public worship held in West Dedham. Those at the house of John Ellis

certainly were earlier, and those in the Clapboard Trees meeting-house preceded them by some months. It is interesting to note, however, that the Church of England services began in this part of the town. They were conducted by the Rev. Timothy Cutler, D.D., a graduate of Harvard College, who was employed by the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. He came to Dedham at the desire of a few Churchmen and of some "dissenters willing to be informed," and had a monthly congregation of from forty to fifty persons. He continued his services until Christmas, 1733, and occasionally for a short time longer. Though the Episcopal church began thus early in West Dedham, it never gained any foothold, and was afterwards continued in the vicinity of the first parish meeting-house.

Having secured their meeting-house and minister, and getting no favor from the first parish and church, the next step for the people in the Clapboard Trees was to appeal to the General Court. This they did immediately after the installation of their minister; for their petition asking for a separate precinct was presented to the General Court June 22, 1735, and appears on the "Journal of the Honourable House of Representatives of His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts-Bay in New England," as follows: —

A petition of Jonathan Ellis and Jedediah Tucker, and thirty others, inhabitants of Dedham, and of that part of the Town called the Clabboard Trees, praying that for as much as the Court have set them off from the South Precinct there, as well as the North, that a committee of this Court may be appointed to repair to that part of Dedham called the Clabboard Trees, and in order to adjust matters, and prevent differences between them and the other Precincts, notifying all concerned of the time and place of meeting, and that the said Committee may be impowred to delineate certain bounds and lines whereby they may be circumscribed, and that they may be also invested with equal Powers Priviliges & Immunities with any other Precinct or Parish; which accompanied a Petition of Mr. Byfield Lyde praying that his Farm in said Town of Dedham may belong to and accounted as part of the Clabboard Tree Precinct. Read and Ordered, That the Petitioners serve the North and South Precincts in Dedham with Copies of these Petitions, that they may show cause, if any they have, on the first Thursday of the next sit-

ting of the Court, why the prayer thereof should not be granted, and the Petitions are referred in the meantime for Consideration.

This petition was taken up in the Council November 26, when it was read a second time in connection with the answers of the north and south precincts. The Council then

Ordered, That the prayer of the Petition be so far granted as that Joseph Wilder, Esq; with such as the honourable House of Representatives shall join be a Committee to repair to the Place Petitioned for to be a Precinct and view the same, and consider the Circumstances thereof, and hear the Parties for and against the Petition, and report as soon as may be, what may be proper for this Court to do thereon, the Committee to give seasonable Notice of the time of their going, and the Charge thereof to be paid as this Court shall order.

This was read in the House November 30, and concurred with. The committee appointed consisted of Joseph Wilder of the Council, and, from the House, of James Warren of Plymouth and Eleazer Porter of Hadley. After this committee had been to Dedham and attended to their duties, they made report of the conclusion arrived at by them : —

The Committee having been on the Land petitioned for to be a Precinct, viewed the same, considered the Circumstances thereof, and heard the Parties for and against the Prayer of the Petition, are humbly of Opinion, That the Prayer of the Petition be so far granted, as that a Line be run from the House of Richard Ellis Northeasterly to the Center or Midway betwixt the Meeting House in the South Precinct and in the Clabboard Trees, and from thence to the House of Ebenezer Ellis, and from thence to the Crossways so called, and be established as a divisional Line betwixt the South Precinct in Dedham and that of the Clabboard Trees, and that the Land lying betwixt that and the Line formerly made and settled betwixt the North and South Precincts, with the Inhabitants thereon, with the Families and their Estates that have been formerly set to them by this Court out of the North Precinct in said Dedham, as also the Family and Estate of Benjamin Fairbank, and such Part of the Estates of Richard Ellis, Ebenezer Ellis and Eliphalet Pond, lying in Dedham, that may fall to the Southward of the first mentioned Line, be erected into a separate Precinct, & have Parish Powers & Priviliges granted to them, saving the Families, Persons & Estates hereafter named, that may fall within the bounds of the Parish above delineated, viz. Ebenezer Bracket, Nathanael Kingsbury, Amos Fisher, and Jonah Fisher, who are still continued to the North Precinct in Dedham, to do Duty and receive Privilege, and William Bullard, Nathan Lewis, Samuel

Farrington, and John Cobb, who belong to the South Precinct, and are still to continue to do Duty and receive Privilege with them as heretofore, neither is this to be understood any ways to alter the Order of this Court formerly made, which obliges a Number of Families belonging to the Clabboard Trees, to pay to the South Precinct for a term of Years. The Committee are also of the Opinion that the Petition of Byfield Lyde, Esq; be dismissed. All which is humbly submitted, in the Name and by Order of the Committee, JOSEPH WILDER.

This report was passed in the Council Jan. 1, 1736, and was read and accepted in the House on the 10th. By this action of the House, the report of the committee went into effect on that day.

For a considerable period after its formation, the Clapboard Trees was called the second parish. It was so designated on the records and on the printed sermons of its earlier ministers. This probably arose from the fact that the church in the west parish was organized earlier than that in the south parish, though the reverse was the case with regard to the precinct organization. By the end of the century, it was designated as the third parish. The parish records, however, used the name Clapboard Trees (so written at first). The village of West Dedham was designated as "the street" or as Cudham, as the south parish was usually called Tiot.

In his *History of Norwood*, Mr. Tinker says that in 1736 seventy-eight persons were assessed in Tiot and fifty-two at the Clapboard Trees.

III.

REV. JOSIAH DWIGHT, THE FIRST MINISTER.

After so long a struggle, the people at the Clapboard Trees had secured the desire of their hearts, a meeting-house and a church of their own. Now began the process of building up their parish, completing their meeting-house, and establishing their church life. The destruction of the church records by fire in 1879, when the house then used as a parsonage was burned, makes it impossible to trace the history of the church as a distinct organization. Much might have been gleaned from them about the early history of the church and parish. In a sermon preached on the second Sunday of the year 1801, Mr. Thacher said that "the church records previous to his settlement in this place, were in a very imperfect state"; but they would have given us much of interest that we can only guess at now. How the church was organized we do not know; but its first deacons were Jonathan Onion and Joseph Ellis, the two men who had been most active in its formation, and who both lived under the very shadow of the meeting-house. Mr. White printed, in an appendix to his Centennial Sermon of 1836, the Covenant of the church, otherwise it would have been lost. It shows a liberal spirit for the time in which it was written, and it contains but little of that abstract theology which usually forms the substance of creeds. It is a practical statement of a working Christianity, in the phraseology then common, and has an aim towards righteousness and godly living rather than in the direction of doctrine. It deserves to be reproduced here as a part of the history of the church, with the names of the original signers: —

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, apprehending ourselves called of God into a sacred fellowship with one another in the profes-

sion and practice of the holy Christian Religion, as a particular church of the Lord Jesus Christ, do solemnly covenant with God and one another, as follows: In the first place, we avouch the Lord this day to be our God, yielding ourselves to him to be his servants, and choosing him to be our portion forever. We give up ourselves to the God whose name alone is Jehovah and is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be his people, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice, declaring our firm assent to the truths and hearty consent to the tenor of the Gospel. We accept of Jesus Christ in all his glorious offices, Prophetical, Priestly and Kingly — and depend on him in the way, which he hath prescribed for instruction, Pardon and Eternal life. We profess our serious resolution to deny, as the grace of God teaches, all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and piously in the present evil world, to endeavor that our conversation may be, as becomes and adorns the Gospel. We promise, by the help of God's grace, to walk together in all the ways of holy communion, as becomes children in the family of Christ: charitably to support and conscientiously to attend the public worship of God in all the instituted duties thereof, and to submit to the discipline of his kingdom, to watch over one another with Christian circumspection, and endeavor our mutual edification and comfort. *Furthermore*, we dedicate our offspring with ourselves to the Lord, engaging to bring them up in His nurture and admonition, and as far as in us lies transmit the ordinances of God pure and entire to them.

ALL THIS we do in the presence and fear of God, with a deep sense of our own unworthiness to be admitted into covenant with him and to enjoy the priviliges of the evangelical Church State, and our own insufficiency to perform the duties of it. And do therefore rely on, and pray to the *God of Grace and Peace*, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, to make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that, which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.

Josiah Dwight,	Joseph Ellis,
Thomas Herring,	John Brackett,
Daniel Fisher,	Joseph Ellis, 2nd.,
John Gay,	John Baker,
Nathaniel Gay,	John Richards,
Lusher Gay,	Benjamin Fairbanks.
Jonathan Onion,	

These persons included less than one-third of the members of the parish. The first assessment roll, made in the

spring of 1737, contained forty-three names, as follows: Lieut. John Baker, Eliphalet Baker, John Baker, Jr., Timothy Baker, Jeremiah Baker, Samuel Badcock, Ensign Joseph Colburn, Ephraim Colburn, Samuel Colburn, Joseph Dean, Antony Dier, Jeremiah Dean, Joseph Ellis, Jonathan Ellis, Deacon Joseph Ellis, Aaron Ellis, William Ellis, Ebenezer Ellis, Samuel Everet, Daniel Fisher, Widow Hannah Fisher, Benjamin Fairbanks, Nathaniel Gay, Lusher Gay, John Gay, Stephen Gay, Daniel Gay, John Gay Tayler, Thomas Herring, Samuel Herring, Samuel Haws, John Haws, Jr., Ebenezer Lewis, Elisha Pike, John MacNab, Deacon Jonathan Onion, Peter Tompson, Jedediah Tucker, Lieut. Jabez Pond, Eliphalet Pond, John Richards, Joseph Richards, Josiah Whitemore. Within the next ten years appeared the names of Kingsbury, Belcher, Campbell, Draper, Pilcher, Cheever, Buckmaster, Whiting, and Chamberlain. These names are here spelled as they appear on the records of the parish. It may also be added, that the names of the first members of the church were preserved by Mr. Thacher in connection with his sermon on the history of the church and parish published in 1801.

The records of the parish were written in a simple, direct, and manly fashion. The first clerk was an educated man, a graduate of Harvard College. He wrote down only what was legally the result of each meeting; but we are sometimes able to read between his lines, and to guess at more than he directly tells us. As a specimen of his work, and as showing just what the records contain, the first two or three pages may be transcribed *verbatim*. The spelling, punctuation, and use of capital letters have been carefully preserved; but it ought to be said that the manner of writing the names of committees, and other details, make the absence of punctuation seem less unfitting on the written than it does on the printed page.

Dedham February ye 14th 1737.

Att a Precinct Meeting warned as the Law directs The Precinct chose Lieut John Baker Moderator Joseph Richards Clerk & sworn. Joseph Ellis Lieut John Baker Joseph Richards Precinct Comttee.

1 It was put to the Precinct whether they would grant Money towards finishing their Meeting House, & it passed in the Affirm:

2 It was put to the Precinct whether they would grant one Hundred and twenty Pounds towards finishing their Meeting House passed in the Affirm:

3 The Precinct chose Lieut. John Baker Lusher Gay Joseph Richards a Committee to lay out the above granted Money on ye House.

Dedham March ye 1st. 1737

Att a Precinct Meeting in the ClapboardTrees warned as the Law directs. The Inhabitants Met & chose Lieut. John Baker Moderator Joseph Richards Precinct Clerk Joseph Ellis Lieut John Baker Joseph Richards Precinct Comttee & Assessors & Sworn as the Law directs Joseph Ellis Junr. Precinct Treasurer & Sworn John Richards Precinct Collector & Sworn

1 It was put to the Precinct whether they would buy the House the Revd. Mr. Dwight now lives in for a Parrish House it passed in the Affirmative.

2 It was put to the Precinct whether they would grant the Sum of one Hundred & ten Pounds for to buy sd House, it passed in the Affirmative

3 It was put to the Precinct whether they would choose a Comttee to examin Accounts about sd House & lay out sd Money on sd House It passed in the Affirmative

4 Nathl Gay Ensign Joseph Colburn Joseph Richards a Comttee chose to examin sd accts & lay out sd Money

5 It was put to the Precinct if it were their Mind to grant fifteen Pounds to pay the Gen: Courts Comttee & buy a Law Book & Precinct Book. It passed in the Affirmative

Dedham June 27th. 1737

Att a Precinct Meeting in the ClapboardTrees warned according to Law: The Inhabitants met & chose Lieut. John Baker Moderator of sd Meeting

1 It was put. if it be the Mind of the Precinct to make all the Money's granted in sd Precinct by the last years Tax Bill passed in the Affirmative

2 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct that all the Money's granted in sd. Precinct be made in one Rate. passed in Affirm.

3 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct to do anyThing towards diging a well for the Precinct House passed in the Affirm:

4 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct to grant ten Pounds towards digging sd well. passed in Affirmative

5 The Precinct made choise of Deacon Onion to lay out sd ten Pounds in digging sd Well

Dedham March 3d. 1738

Att a Precinct Meeting in the ClapboardTree Precinct warned according to Law. The Inhabitants met & chose Lieut. John Baker Moderator of sd. Meeting. Joseph Richards Precinct Clerk & sworn att the same Time by the Moderator of sd. Meeting Joseph Ellis John Baker Joseph Ellis Junr. Comttee. & Assessors & Sworn as the Law directs Stephen Gay Collector & sworn att the same Time by the Clerk Joseph Ellis Junr. Treasurer. & sworn

Dedham April 17th. 1738

Att a Precinct Meeting in the ClapboardTree Precinct warned according to Law. The Inhabitants met & chose Lieut. John Baker Moderator of sd. Meeting.

1. It was put; to see if it be the Mind of the Precinct to grant Liberty to those Inhabitants of sd. Precinct as inclined to build their own Pews att their own Cost & Charge. passed in the Affirmative.

2. To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct That the Inhabitants of sd. Precinct that incline to build their own Pews shall make Choise of their Place to build upon (successively) beginning with the highest in the last single Rate passed in the Affirmative

3. It was put; if it be the Mind of the Precinct to grant eighty Pounds of Money towards finishing the Precinct Meeting House passed in Affirmative.

Dedham July ye 5th. 1738

Att a Meeting in the ClapboardTree Precinct warned according to Law; The Inhabitants met & chose Lieut. John Baker Moderator of sd Meeting.

1 It was put to see if it be the Mind of the Precinct that Messr. Natll. Colburn Richard Ellis Ebenr. Kingsberry Danll. Draper & Timothy Draper may vote in any affair relating to Pews. passed in the Affirmative.

2 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct that the Liberty granted to the Inhabitants of this Parrish to build Pews att their own Cost & Charge should run to them & their Wives dureing both their natural Lives & then to return to the Precinct for regulation, the Precinct first paying the Prime Cost to the Heirs of the deceased passed in the Affirm:

3 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct to grant twenty Pounds of Money to be added to the eighty Pounds already granted towards finishing their Meeting House passed in the Affirm:

4 To see if it be the Mind of the Precinct by vote to make the House they now Meet in for publick Worship their own passed in the Affirm:

The first meeting of the parish of which there is a record was held Feb. 14, 1737, when the precinct voted to finish

the meeting-house, which was at this time nothing but a frame covered with boards, and without pews. The vote with reference to the possession of the meeting-house by the parish may refer to the legal action necessary in order to secure its ownership by the parish or it may refer to its purchase from individuals, but probably the former, as there is no other mention of the subject and no money was voted for buying it. For several years, the meeting-house was a subject of much thought and labor to the members of the parish. What they did is not very interesting in itself, but it will help to bring before us one side of the life of that time. In April, 1738, it was voted to give the inhabitants the privilege of building their own pews, the highest bidder having the first choice as to locality. This would indicate the democratic character of the parish, for in some other parishes at this time the people were rigidly seated according to their social rank. In September of the same year, they voted to build four seats on each side of the meeting-house "for their present use and service," and to build a pair of stairs into the gallery. In 1739, it was voted to pay for the pew in which Mrs. Dwight sat, and to build a pair of stairs up gallery, and lay down the gallery floor, and finish the fore seats all round. In 1740, the finishing of the pews and the completion of the gallery again claimed much of the attention of the parish meeting.

The land on which the first meeting-house was located was given by Joseph Ellis, who lived on the spot where the house of Col. James M. Ellis now stands. It was forty-four rods in extent, and was surveyed and plotted in 1754. The house of Jonathan Onion stood near where the barn of Mr. Greenwood Fuller is now located. The meeting-house was half way between these two houses, but more to the west, on land now occupied by an orchard. On his first coming to live in the parish, Mr. Dwight occupied a house which stood where the house of Greenwood Fuller is now located; and tradition has it that the present house contains a part of the old one. At its second meeting, held March 3, 1737, the parish voted one hundred and twenty pounds to buy this

for a parish house. At this time or very soon after, ten acres of land were bought from Jonathan Onion, which he described as "near my own dwelling on the northerly side of the road leading to Pond Plain." He gave one and one-half acres to the parish; one acre each was paid for by Joseph Ellis, Thomas Herring, Daniel Fisher, Nathaniel Gay, Lusher Gay, John Gay, Jr., Benjamin Fairbanks, and John Richards; one-quarter of an acre by Joseph Ellis, Jr.; and ten rods each by Dr. Joseph Richards, Timothy Richards, Samuel Richards, Josiah Dwight, and Michael Dwight.* The house was located on the southerly side of this land. The plot made of this piece of land at the time still exists among the parish papers, and has been reproduced in *fac-simile* for this work, but somewhat reduced in size. In 1740, the land was fenced by the parish.

The first minister, Josiah Dwight, was born in Dedham, Feb. 8, 1670, and was over sixty-four years of age when he began his work in the parish. His father was Capt. Timothy Dwight, who was one of the leading men of the town, of the second generation. He was born in England, and came to Dedham with his father, John Dwight, when a boy. He was for ten years town clerk, twenty-five years selectman, and in the General Court for two years. He was a man of great energy and influence. Four of his sons, Nathaniel, Josiah, Henry, and Michael, have had long lines of descendants, who are found in every part of the country, and in places of responsibility and trust. The many professors, teachers, clergymen, and authors of the Dwight name are the descendants of Nathaniel and Henry.

The eighth child of Capt. Timothy Dwight, there being fourteen in all, received his early education at home, graduated from Harvard in 1687, obtaining his second degree in 1720. In the summer of 1690, he was installed as the first minister of Woodstock, Conn., that town being owned by Roxbury and under Massachusetts laws. The town was a new one, the people not numerous or wealthy. A church

*This was a brother of the Rev. Josiah Dwight, being the son of Capt. Timothy Dwight by his third wife.

was built in 1699, but his salary was small and not promptly paid. He was paid his salary partly in land, which he cultivated, and thus gave offence to some of his parish. He was sometimes hasty in speech, and did not always refrain from using sharp words; and a gradual feeling of opposition to him was developed. He was voted more salary in 1730, and it was hinted to him that he should give more time to his parish. Some years of bitter contention followed, and then he asked to be dismissed. At a town meeting in 1726, he acknowledged his faults, and promised to amend them; but the town voted, sixty to one, and one neutral, that his labors would not be any longer to the profit of the people. In September, 1726, he was dismissed, after a pastorate of more than thirty-six years. He then went to live in Thompson, Conn. The neighboring churches, believing he had not been justly dealt with, took up his cause and called a council; none of the charges against him were proven. He admitted rashness of speech and want of meekness in some cases, but this seems to have been the extent of his errors.

After leaving the Clapboard Trees, at the age of seventy-two, Mr. Dwight returned to Thompson, where he died in 1748, at the age of seventy-seven. His son-in-law, the Rev. Marston Cabot, was the minister in Thompson; and in his genial society the last days of Mr. Dwight were cheerfully spent. He was a man of a positive character, much energy of will, a good preacher, and somewhat singular in manner. He was not always wise and discreet, used too sharp a tongue, and was inclined to contend for his own rights. Mr. Thacher said that he "was supposed by his contemporaries to be a man of good natural abilities and considerable acquirements in ancient learning. He was well versed in old school divinity, and was respected by the more enlightened, as a scholar and a gentleman. Though a man of piety and virtue, he was singular in his manners. His peculiarities increased in his old age."

Mr. Dwight married Mary Partridge in 1695. She was the daughter of Col. Samuel Partridge, of Hadley; and his

brother Nathaniel, who settled in Northampton, married her sister Mehitable. He had thirteen children,— Anna, John, Ruth, Dorothy, Flint, Mehitable, Eunice, Mary, Elizabeth, Theodore, and three who died young. Only his younger children could have accompanied him to the Clapboard Trees in 1730, and possibly none but Elizabeth and Theodore. Elizabeth married Jeremiah Baker, and lived on Fox Hill until her death. Theodore died unmarried at the age of thirty-two.

The genealogy of the Dwight family has been very fully given in *The History of the Descendants of John Dwight, of Dedham, Mass.*, a work written by Benjamin W. Dwight, and published in 1874. It is in two large volumes, of over five hundred pages each. Forty-two pages of this work are devoted to the Rev. Josiah Dwight and his descendants. There is also a sketch of his life in the third volume of Sibley's *Harvard Graduates.*

About the year 1725 there was a considerable agitation in the churches in regard to the methods of singing. The old method of "lining out" hymns was discarded by some, and it was proposed to give to the art of singing more of expression. On this subject, Mr. Dwight preached a sermon, which was afterward printed, and with a title-page worded as follows: "An Essay to Silence the *Outcry* that has been made in some Places against *Regular Singing* in A Sermon Preach'd at **Framingham.** By the Reverend Mr. *Josiah Dwight*, Pastor of the Church of Christ in Woodstock. Boston: Printed for *John Eliot*, and Sold at his Shop at the South-End of the Town. 1725." The text was from Acts xvii., 6,— "These that have turned the world upside down are come here also."

Mr. Dwight began his sermon with a consideration of how new things may be misunderstood, and how they may be thought to be turning the world upside down, when, in reality, their effect is wholly good. He then spoke of singing as a natural gift, and of the pleasure it gives when rightly used. To him, it was a good gift of the Father, to be cultivated and enjoyed. Then he proceeded to answer the objec-

tions raised against the proposed reform. He said that the elderly should give up the old way, if the new one elevates the spirit of worship. To those who said that the rejection of the old way would be a condemnation of the fathers, he said: "And I see not but some congregations, and sundry in many more, are to be blamed for their ignorance and heedlessness about the tunes, that may be can't distinguish one tune from another when sung, and slide out of one tune into another, and do not mind it, or sing the lines of several tunes for one, when a little care and study would have saved the disorder. Therefore I would propose, that there might be many advantages attending a practice which I could wish all our congregations were come into, viz., to name the tune together with the psalm, and all the skillful of the congregation be sure to fall in with the first note and syllable; nor is this a bare proposal without experiment, for some of us have been some time in proof hereof, and see its expediency." He said that the new way is singing in the spirit as much as the old way was, that the disturbance of regular singing was only incidental, that it is approved by Scripture as much as the old way, and that it is a help in promoting piety and devotion.

The references to Mr. Dwight in the parish records are of a business character, for the most part. After the purchase of the house he lived in, the next mention of him was in connection with the digging of a well at the parsonage. This not having been done, at the next meeting it was voted to do something farther towards digging a well for the Rev. Mr. Dwight, "and also to build him a little gate." His salary was one hundred pounds a year, with firewood. In 1742, his salary was voted; but no firewood was allowed him. At a meeting held November 12 of that year, the question was raised of getting another minister; but the proposition was voted down. The difficulties, whatever they were, increased as the months went by; and March 16, 1743, it was voted "to settle another minister agreeable with the consent of their Revd. Pastor."

At a meeting held April 13, it was discussed whether

"the Precinct would have preaching among themselves," while only twenty-five pounds were voted for that purpose. A special meeting was held May 20, to act upon a communication sent to the church by Mr. Dwight. At this meeting,

It was put: to see if it be the Mind of the Precinct to make the Revd. Dwight a generous Grant of fifty Pounds old Tenour on Condition he quits the pastoral Office among us & is dismissed by his consent att a Chh meeting.

This motion was carried in the affirmative; but John Richards, John Gay, Peter Thompson, and William Ellis entered their dissent against the vote. The communication from Mr. Dwight was in these words, the spelling of the records being retained:—

To the Chh of Christ att the Clapboard Trees in Dedham:

Hond & beloved,

Tis well known to all the World, you settled me in this Place with the utmost Chearfulness & Pleasure; and for Years together spake of my Ministerial Labors as Superior to those of any ClergyMan round about: and as to my Carriage among you, I am conscious to myself, it has been universally & entirely innocent. However, as there is a Fire of Contention kindled among us, which it seems, cannot be extinguised but by my Departure, I consent, from a Regard to the Glory of God & your Welfare, to quit the pastoral Office among you, upon your regular Dismission of me att a Chh Meeting; and upon the following Condition, namely; That you make me a generous Present of fifty Pounds old Tenour; & in Token of hearty Love and Regards, a Select Number of you accompany me & my Family to Thompson, when I am ready to remove

I am, Gentlemen

Your very humble Servant

Josiah Dwight

DEDHAM May 16th 1743.

Mr. Dwight was dismissed according to his request, but whether the "select number" of the parish accompanied him to Woodstock the records do not indicate.

The first parish tax was levied on fifty persons, one of

them being a widow. In 1765 there were forty-two houses in the parish and three hundred and thirteen inhabitants. The people were nearly all farmers, lived very simply, and enjoyed life under humble circumstances. The first clerk of the parish, Joseph Richards, was a physician, "eminent in his profession" according to Mr. Thacher, and he was a justice of the peace, a colonel of militia, and a member of the House of Representatives for six years in succession, from 1744–50. He was born Feb. 25, 1701, graduated at Harvard College in 1721, and died April 18, 1761, "leaving behind him a very amiable and honorable name." The Lieut. John Baker, who was the moderator at all the parish meetings for the first two years, was probably the John Baker who lived on Fox Hill, and whose father settled the farm now occupied by W. E. Chadwick, about the year 1670. The second John was born in 1677, married Sarah Whiting in 1701, and died in 1768. His youngest son married the youngest daughter of the Rev. Josiah Dwight. This farm was owned by the Baker family for nearly two hundred years. Deacon Joseph Ellis obtained license "to keep tavern" July 28, 1732; and his tavern contained one room on the first floor and one sleeping room above. It was situated near the meeting-house, probably. Much that seems necessary to our life was then wanting. The books were few and poor. There were no daily newspapers, and the few issued weekly were not much worth the reading. About this time was introduced the custom of singing the hymn through without its being "lined out" by the deacons. In 1751, the first church gave up the use of the New England Psalms, and adopted the hymns of Tate and Brady. Even then, the old things were being left behind, and innovations were being introduced; but these incidents show how simple was the life of that time.

In his *History of Dedham*, Worthington speaks of this period as one of great disorder and ignorance. He says the schools were at their lowest stage, and that "few could have had any instruction." He mentions the fact, as an indication of the ignorance of the people at about this time,

that the town records were poorly kept. The penmanship was poor, the spelling antiquated, and the grammar not correct. In the second parish (South Dedham, now Norwood), in all these respects the records show an absence of education. As a specimen of the spelling, the word *oathordocts* will suffice. In the Clapboard Trees parish, however, the records were well kept, and in a manner superior to those of the town or the first and second parishes. The penmanship was excellent, the language good, and the spelling fairly modern. The old spelling and the use of contractions were not so common as in the town and first and second parish records.

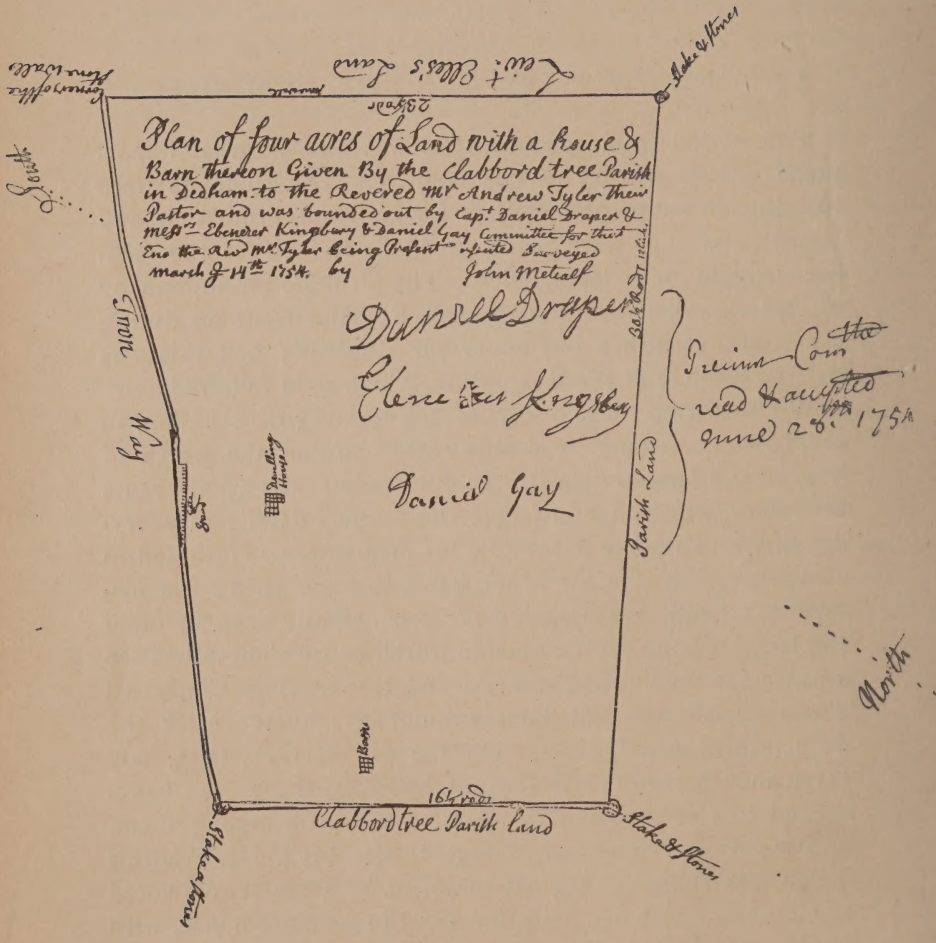
On the 26th of February, 1809, the last sermon was preached in the first meeting-house of the parish, by Mr. Thacher, the minister at that time. In that sermon, he described the men who built it, and with that knowledge of them which came to him from their sons. No better tribute can be paid to their memory than that which he then offered: "Instead of dwelling in ceiled houses painted with vermillion, while the house of God lay waste, the first settlers of this precinct were content with cottages of the most simple construction, with food of the coarsest nature, and with the plainest dress, that they might obtain a convenient and decent habitation for the King of Heaven, and might perpetuate the rituals of Christianity according to the Scripture. They were willing to travel through the world like pilgrims and strangers, that they might prove their regard to the Gospel, and their promptness to suffer for the cause of Christ. Was not this spirit exemplified in rearing this house where we now stand? This was the work of a few unincorporated individuals, bound to each other by no other law than zeal and love.

IV.

REV. ANDREW TYLER, THE SECOND MINISTER.

The period from 1740 to 1780 was one of great importance in the history of our country. The colonists were learning to associate together for common protection and benefit, and they were being gradually trained for the coming struggle for independence. The struggle for supremacy in America between France and England went on during this time, resulting in victory for England; and this was but the prelude to the Revolution, which soon followed.

We turn from these events of the forming of a nation, to see how the people lived who were learning the worth of liberty, and how to gain it. In our study of the great events of history, we are apt to forget the homely details of every-day life, which make it possible for men to prize truth and to struggle for it. On the other hand, in considering the history of a town or parish, we must constantly keep in mind the larger events of the outside world, or we shall fail to see a cause for much that men do and think. The Clapboard Trees parish was not long without a minister after the departure of Mr. Dwight. On the 5th of Oct., 1743, only three months after Mr. Dwight had left, the parish "proceeded to the choice of a minister to settle among them, and when the votes were counted, the Revd. Mr. Andrew Tyler was chose by a great majority." Then it was voted to give him "and his heirs forever the precinct house, with four acres of land, to encourage him to settle among us." This was in accordance with an almost universal custom of that day, which made it necessary that a parish should provide a minister with a home or a considerable estate on his settlement. He was expected to live in the parish all his life, and, once settled, to remain until his death. Sometimes


Plan of four acres of Land with a House &
Barn thereon Given By the Clabbord tree Parish
in Dedham: to the Revered Mr Andrew Tyler their
Pastor and was bounded out by Capt Daniel Draper &
mest Ebenezer Kingsbury & Daniel Gay Committee for that
End the said Mr Tyler Being Present & united & surveyed
march ye 14th 1754. by John Metcalf
Dunell Draper
Ebenezer Kingsbury
Daniel Gay
Town Way
Parish Land
Clabbord tree Parish Land
North

PLOT OF THE LAND GIVEN MR. TYLER.

money was given him, sometimes land, and sometimes a house. For the first year, Mr. Tyler was granted "one hundred and sixty pounds a year old tenor for his salary, and the improvement of the remainder of the precinct lands, as long as he is our minister." At a meeting of the parish, held October 31, it was voted to give Mr. Tyler twenty-five cords of wood after the first three years. This, also, was in accordance with a custom of the time,—that the minister was to be provided with his firewood; and always the wood was furnished or its equivalent in money given. It is probable that this custom was the result of the poverty of the people in the colonies and the simplicity of their life. They had plenty of wood, but little money; and it was easier for them to cut the minister's wood for him than to give him a larger salary.

A few days after being invited to settle with the parish, Mr. Tyler sent his letter of acceptance. It is an interesting illustration of the ministerial mind of that period, and is almost ludicrous in its mixture of piety and thrift. It was incumbent on Mr. Tyler, as a minister, to make a great use of religious phrases, and they were probably sincere in his case; but he mixed with them a careful consideration of the worldly advantages to be obtained from his situation.

BOSTON, Octbr. 22d. 1743.

To the Chh & Congregation belonging to the Clapboard Tree Parish in Dedham, to be communicated.

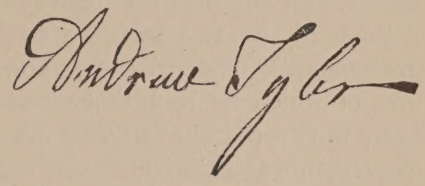
Dear Brethren:

When I consider the work of the Ministry, & take a View of the many Difficulties that attend it, and att the same Time see my own insufficiency for the right Discharge of such an important Trust, and consider of that most dreadful Curs with which they are threatned who do the Work of the Lord negligently, I am almost ready to give up all Thoughts of entering upon that Business — tho' noble and excellent in it Self. And, indeed, I should be quite discouraged were there not many gracious Promises made to such as are really desirous of being faithfull & successful in the Work of the Lord. But when I take a View of that gracious Promise of our ascended Saviour to his Disciples & so to his Ministers in all Ages, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World. This much encourages me in En-

gaging in this noble Employ; an Employment which there is not an Angel in Heaven but would clap his Wings for Joy to be engaged in. But when I look furthur into the future & eternal State, & meditate upon that Glory which is promised to the faithful Ministers of Christ, They that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, & they that turn many to Righteousness as the Starrs forever & ever. These considerations seem to drive all my Fears away; & animate & encourage me to a Performance of that difficult Office. My Brethren, I hope when I first devoted myself to the Service of God in the Ministry, the Motives which induced me were a Sincere Desire of bringing Glory to my God & being an Instrument in the Hand of God of bringing many Souls to Glory. And as I hope these were my Views att first, so I humbly trust I act from the same now. And that my earnest Desire of God's Glory being advanced, & Happiness of precious Souls being promoted is as great if not greater than ever. And now, as God, in whose Hands are the Hearts of all Men, has been pleased in his holy & wise Providence to incline you to make Choice of me, his most unWorthy Servant, to be your Pastor, & has so greatly united you in your Choice of me, I can't but take Notice of the Hand of God in it, especially when so many other Churches are torn with Quarrels & Disputes; and have, I hope, thought seriously upon your Invitation & the Offers you have made me for my Maintenace. I have advised with my Friends, who, I trust, have the Interest of our Lord Jesus & his Religion att Heart; and, as I hope & trust, have been careful in committing my Cause into his Hands who is infinite in Wisdom, beging of him all that Light & Direction I stood in need of in acting worthy of such an important Affair. I came upon the whole to this Conclusion, that I would accept of your Invitation & do now declare my Acceptance of it, hoping and expecting that from Time to Time you will make such Additions to what you now offer me as may serve to maintain me comfortably & handsomely so long as God in his holy & wise Providence shall continue me among you. And also that you pass a vote that you will find me my Wood, after three years from this Time. And these Things, my Brethren, are so reasonable in themselves, & I make no Manner of Doubt, appear so reasonable to you, that I need not use one Argument to persuade you that they are so. And now here upon, my dear Brethren, I devote myself to the Service of God. I offer myself to you to spend & be spent in your Souls Service. And O my Brethren, pray for me. I am but young & unexperienced & need your fervent Prayers to God for me that I may be found faithful to God & your Souls, least after I have preached to others I be a castaway myself. I consider the important & weighty Charge I am about to undertake, & let this stir up the Gift of Prayer in you & your spirits of Prayer. And I, that God would make me a great Blessing to you, & you to me, and many of you be Seals of my Ministry for my Comfort here & Crown of rejoicing in the

great Day & forever in Heaven; & when God shall right up the People may it be said that such & such were born to God here. And when he shall make up his Jewels may you & I be found of that blessed Number in whom the Riches of free Grace shall be admired & magnified forever & ever, and who shall Joyn the Angels & Saints above in the Hallelujahs of that Temple above not made with Hands where his Worship is pure unmixed & eternal. Amen & amen.

Your Servt. in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus,



Mr. Tyler was ordained Nov. 30, 1743, and on the same day was admitted a member of the church by a letter of recommendation from the Brattle Street Church in Boston. The churches in Brattle Street, Boston, Medfield, Natick, Milton, Hingham, the first in Dedham, and the second in Roxbury were invited to join in the ordination. The prayer was made by the Rev. Dr. Gay, of Hingham. The sermon was preached from Revelation vi., 2, by the Rev. Mr. Cooper, of Boston. The charge was by the Rev. Mr. Baxter, of Medfield, and the right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Samuel Dexter, of Dedham.

Mr. Tyler was born in Boston, Aug. 20, 1719, the son of Andrew Tyler, Esq., of that city. He graduated at Harvard in 1738; and he died in Boston, May 3, 1775. His zeal for the royal cause, when the colonists were beginning to agitate for liberty, was the original cause of his trouble with his parishioners in later years. He married, March 20, 1745–46, on her sixteenth birthday, Mary Richards, daughter of Dr. Joseph Richards, first clerk of the parish. They had nine sons,— Andrew, Joseph, William, Pepperell, George, Belcher, John, David, and one whose name is not known.

Two of Mr. Tyler's sermons were printed in 1756; and they were preached February 8 and 15, "at Dedham, 2d parish." They were published at the desire of the hearers,

and were on "The Terms of Christianity briefly Considered, and the Reasonableness of them Illustrated." The second sermon was a continuation of the first; and they were printed together in Boston by Edes & Gill, "at their printing-office next to the Prison, in Queen Street." The text for both sermons was Luke xiv., 26: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Each of the two sermons concludes with a "short improvement." That to the first one is in three parts, in the first of which he said that we may judge of our religion, as to its worth and sincerity, by our comparative subordination of everything to Christ. "Let us be cautioned," he says in the second part, "against imagining that an unkind, morose Behavior towards our fellow Men, and especially our near and dear Relatives, is any part of the Religion of Jesus Christ." In the third part, he said: "Let us be exhorted to think seriously upon the Nature of the Religion of Jesus Christ, and make it our principal Care to get our Affections disengaged from all earthly Enjoyments, and place them principally upon our God, and Redeemer."

The second sermon is an attempt to show the reasonableness of the conditions of salvation as they are presented by Christianity. They both are strong, well-reasoned sermons, calculated to make an impression on a congregation, as they evidently did. They indicate that the preacher was a man of fair ability, and that he was inclined, according to the fashion of the day, to give to Christianity a somewhat practical interpretation.

The parish records contain little more than the votes passed at the meetings held from time to time, but they give us hints here and there of what men were doing and thinking. At the meeting when the date of Mr. Tyler's ordination was fixed upon, Joseph Ellis, Nathaniel Colburn, and Ebenezer Kingsbury were appointed a committee to provide suitable entertainment for the ministers and messengers; and seven pounds new tenor or twenty-eight pounds old tenor were voted for this purpose. A dinner

and plenty of rum were provided for the ordination, without doubt, as that was the custom of the time. At the parish meeting the next year, it was voted to give Mr. Tyler the loose money put into the contribution box, which was also a custom in most of the churches. The salary was small, and it was added to in this way by the free-will offerings of the people. Mr. Tyler's salary was from sixty to eighty pounds, which was a small sum, owing to the financial depression of that period and the want of a stable currency. When the loose money was voted to the minister, it was also decided "to make two lights below the girt, one on each side of the desk in the pulpit." It will be seen by this that the work of completing the church was still going on. In 1745, it was decided to lath and plaster the meeting-house above the gallery floor and overhead the minister's pew, and also to furnish the side galleries with pews. The granting of money for this work was deferred, however, to another meeting, the pressure of the war with the French probably being felt. At this meeting, liberty was given for any one to build horse stables on the bounds or outsides of their lands near the meeting-house. It would seem that Mr. Tyler was the owner of a slave whose name was Weston, and who swept and took the care of the meeting-house from 1748 to 1756. The treasurer's book in 1754 had this entry: "Paid to Westown negro to Mr. Tyler six shillings, it being for taking care of ye meeting house in ye year 1753." A few years later, one of Mr. Tyler's sons performed the same service.

One of the difficulties of the time of the French wars is to be seen on the pages of the record. In 1746 it was voted to give Mr. Tyler "a free gift of forty pounds old tenor on consideration of the scarcity and uncommon price of the necessarys of life," and in 1747 he was granted one hundred and forty pounds old tenor "on account of the great rise of the necessarys of life." For the same cause, his salary in 1748 was three hundred and fifty pounds, and four hundred in 1749. A part of this rise in prices was doubtless due to the unreliable financial methods of the colonies and to the

depreciation in the currency. In 1750, his salary came back to a normal basis, and was sixty pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence. He was allowed seven pounds six shillings and eightpence for firewood. This remained his salary for several years; but in 1762 it was raised to eighty pounds, while ten pounds were allowed for firewood.

The controversy about the parish lines between the Clapboard Trees and the other parishes in the town was continued for many years, and on several occasions that subject was discussed in the parish meetings or referred to committees for adjustment. A difficulty with the first parish about lands also excited attention. In 1758, the parish meeting chose "Thirteen men to Over See ye Boys on Sabath Days"; and this committee was renewed the following year.

For about twenty years, the ministry of Mr. Tyler was successful, and he was popular with his people. After that time there were causes of dissatisfaction on the part of the congregation, which gathered force for a few years, and then found expression at a parish meeting held Feb. 7, 1769. At that time, a petition was presented, requesting a committee to wait on Mr. Tyler, and ask him on what terms he would give up his pastoral connection. At the meeting held the 20th of March, the committee reported that Mr. Tyler had no terms to offer. No salary was granted at this meeting, and such was the action at meetings held in June, September, and November. At a meeting in January, 1770, it was decided to ask the church to join in calling an ecclesiastical council "to give their judgment and advice" in regard to the difficulty, which by this time had grown to large proportions. In a communication addressed by this meeting to the church, the members of the parish say: "You cannot be insensible that the animosities among us are great and melancholy, and attended with many great and unspeakable disadvantages." At the March meeting, Mr. Tyler was voted his salary for the previous year; but the sum was reduced to forty pounds. At the March meeting of 1771 there was still a refusal to grant a salary; but a

committee, consisting of Capt. Daniel Gay, Deacon Joseph Ellis, and Isaac Whiting, was appointed "to prepare reasons to be entered on record to justify the parish in neglecting to grant a salary for the support of the Reverend Andrew Tyler." This committee made a well-written statement of the grievances of the parish, which was adopted by the meeting. That they should have carried their action so far as to prepare such a statement can be understood only when we remember that the settlement of a minister was then a process having a legal significance, and that the minister could hold his place until death, unless the proper means were taken to dispossess him of it. Had it not been for this feeling of the binding connection of minister and parish, which was carefully protected by the laws, it is probable Mr. Tyler would have given up his position long before he did. This necessity of resorting to harsh means, to get rid of a man they had ceased to have confidence in, is seen throughout the report of the committee, in the spirit which breathed through it: —

The Committee appointed to prepare Reasons to be entered on Record, to justify the Conduct of the Parish in neglecting to grant a Salary for the Support of the reverend Mr Tyler, have attended that Service, and beg Leave to report the following Draft; which is humbly submitted.

The Committee find that the Laws of the Province require that a Minister should be *learned*, *orthodox*, *able*, *pious*, and of *good Conversation* — and that when a Minister, *qualified as above said*, *is not suitably encouraged*, *supported or maintained*, he may have his Remedy by a legal Process. But your Committee are humbly of Opinion that the Minister of this Parish is very deficient with respect to some of these Qualifications.

As to his *Learning*, the Committee, not being competent Judges themselves, can only say, that they know some Men of Learning have given Intimations that he was reckoned, when at College, but a very indifferent Scholar — and that Ministers in general are looked upon to be much Superior to him in that Respect, by those who are able to form a proper Judgment.

As to his *Orthodoxy*, the Parish have never made any public Complaint, and therefore the Committee do not think themselves authorized to make any Observations in regard to that Particular.

As to his *Ability*, (which we take not to imply precisely the same as

Learning,) if by that is meant what in Scripture is meant, by an *able* Minister of the New Testament — apt to teach — one who allways feeds his People with Knowledge and Understanding — one thoroughly furnished for the good Work of the Ministry — *able* to convince Gainsayers — who can *comfort* as well as *reprove* — one who is able to govern his own Temper, so as to bear with the Infirmities of others, and to be *patient* towards all Men — a Workman who needeth not to be ashamed — one who knows how carefully to avoid such Things as *gender Strife*, and which tend to subvert the Hearers —— If all this is meant, in the Law, by a Minister's being a Man of *Ability*, then Mr Tyler, as the Committee humbly conceive, is much deficient as to this Article.

But what is most exceptionable in Mr Tyler's Character is, that he does not appear to be a Man of that *Piety* and *Good Conversation*, which the Laws of the Province, as well as the Laws of Christ require. The Committee join Piety and a Good Conversation together, because they think that where the former is the latter will never be wanting.

With respect to his Conversation they are bound to mention, his many rash and unguarded Expressions, from Time to Time uttered, which it would be tedious to enumerate; and the repeated Instances of his not paying that Regard to Truth which every Christian ought to do.

Mr Tyler has, in the Opinion of the Committee, since the Commencement of our present Difficulties, handled the Word of God deceitfully, in order to level his Artillery against those with whom he has been offended — He has been noisy, boisterous and turbulent, and has not observed the Direction to the Servant of the Lord, *not to Strive*.— He has not exhorted with Longsuffering, Gentleness and Meekness of Wisdom.

In dispensing the Discipline of the Church, the Committee apprehend, he has acted partially and through Prejudice.— They also think his general Conduct has shown that he has been lifted up with Pride — That he has been far from exhibiting a Pattern of good Works, and has not been careful, as a Minister ought to be, not to give offence; and consequently has not been an Example to the People in Conversation and in Charity — and if he has known the State of Christ's Flock, yet he has not adapted his Behaviour and public Performances thereto; but has, by a haughty and overbearing Carriage, increased the Uneasinesses that have subsisted among us, which, had it not been his own Fault, might long ago have been happily accomodated; but now, alas! are past Remedy but by a Seperation.

For the aforementioned Reasons, & others that might be enumerated, the Committee are humbly of Opinion, that the Parish are not in Duty bound to grant Mr Tyler any further Means of Support — and they are encouraged to hope that if he should ever make Application

therefor by a Process in Law, the Honorable Court will be of the Same Mind.

DANIEL GAY,
JOSEPH ELLIS, } *Committee.*
ISAAC WHITING,

DEDHAM THIRD PARISH
March 25th 1771

This committee was composed of the best men in the parish. Joseph Ellis had been a deacon of the church since its first organization, being now an old man. He had been a representative in 1751, and again in 1758–59. Isaac Whiting had recently served as the clerk of the parish for ten years. He had also been town clerk, serving in that capacity from 1769 to 1773; and he was elected a selectman in 1753, holding that office for twelve years. Daniel Gay had been a selectman for three years.

Mr. Tyler seems to have been as unwilling to leave the parish as some of his parishioners were anxious to have him go. At a parish meeting held in December, 1771, he was voted one hundred and eighty pounds, on condition that the parish was discharged from any farther requirements in regard to his support. Mr. Tyler communicated to the parish his own views of the situation, under date of Jan. 1. 1772, in reply to this action of the parish, which was presented at a meeting held the same date: —

I have taken your proposals into as mature consideration as the short time you have adjourned your parish meeting to, and my other engagements, would permit. And upon the whole, I can hardly suppose you yourselves can think what you have offered to be an adequate consideration even for past services and wood, especially considering the great disadvantages to which you must needs think I have been subjected by your neglect of voting my supply from year to year for three years past. Nor can I think I should be just to myself or to other persons of my order, even of ages yet unborn, should I, without any further consideration, give up the just claims I might have also upon you for future services, should it please God to spare my life to minister in the place to which in his providence he hath called me, more especially since, after all the "fiery tryals" some of your number have caused me to pass through, there has not been found "matter of occasion" against me in the opinion of judges of your own selection, and whose judgment or

result this church of Christ expressed their high approbation of (if I mistake not) by a unanimous vote of thanks.

But, gentlemen, if you prize your freedom from the obligations you are under to me so far as to purchase it at an honorable rate, I am ready, for your gratification, to take the matter into serious consideration, and shall give you in a very short time, an answer thereon.

The parish charged a committee to ascertain his terms; and his reply was read at a meeting held January 15, in which he said, "The proposals you have made appear to me so far short of what is right and just that, until your sentiments are greatly altered, I apprehend there is no expedience in my suggesting anything further to you on the subject." Another committee was chosen to wait on him, and to the meeting held on the 29th he sent this communication: —

As I devoted myself in my early days to the work of the gospel ministry in this place, and for the sake, I trust, of promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, and the best interests of your immortal souls; and, having obtained help from God, continue to this day to minister to you in holy things, so I apprehend I should have very satisfactory reasons before I can see it my duty to relinquish my pastoral office among you.

In an affair which not only relates to my own person and family, but the interests of these churches, I desire to act with all deliberation. I am fully of the mind, that till you make proposals much superior to what you have done, I should dishonor God and the interests of religion, by complying with those you have already made; but when I am enabled to quit my pastoral care of the flock of Christ in this place on terms honorable to myself, and just to my family, and consistent with the honor of God and these churches, I am willing to do it.

Whatever terms shall be properly proposed by you to me, I will take them into my serious and deliberate consideration, and shall be willing on so interesting an affair to advise with gentlemen that I have reason to think are wise, upright and judicious, and wish well to you as well as myself and the interests of our holy religion. In a word, things being no way prepared for such a reference as you propose, it will be time enough to think upon such a proposal when they are.

It would seem from these letters that Mr. Tyler was inclined to what was fair and right. So far as the trouble can now be judged of, he was more nearly in the right than those who opposed him. The church was on his side, while

those members of the parish who were not church members included his opponents. When the dispute was left to disinterested men, he received more than double the sum which the parish proposed to pay him.

The controversy went on through the year 1772, the parish making offers for a settlement of the question, and Mr. Tyler declining them because the parish was not liberal enough in its proposals. In October, this article was inserted in the warrant calling a special meeting of the parish: —

> As Mr. Tyler has, as many apprehend, refused to comply with the reasonable request of many members of the church in this place, and also refused many fair and generous offers from the parish, and his tarry here as a minister is thought to be attended with awful and deplorable consequences; and if it should so happen that the precinct shall not be any farther satisfied with the proposals that may be made by Mr. Tyler at this meeting, then that the precinct take the expediency and utility of dismissing Mr. Andrew Tyler from his ministerial office among us into consideration, and vote on the affair as they shall think proper.

Acting on this article, the parish proposed to leave the dispute to the settlement of three disinterested persons; and, after still farther delays and misunderstandings, this proposition was carried into effect. In a communication made to the parish Nov. 18, 1772, Mr. Tyler proposed a committee to whom the whole controversy should be referred, to be mutually chosen by himself and the parish. This proposition was accepted; and the committee chosen consisted of the Hon. James Humphrey, the Hon. Samuel Danforth, Norton Quincy, Col. Benjamin Lincoln, Doctor Cotton Tufts, Josiah Edson, and Deacon Jabez Fisher, who were fully empowered to settle the terms on which the difficulty should be adjusted. They met Dec. 12, 1772, Mr. Danforth not being present, and after hearing evidence decided that the parish pay Mr. Tyler three hundred and ninety-two pounds and sixteen shillings within six months, and that Mr. Tyler give a bond of one thousand pounds that he would ask dismission within seven days. On the 17th of December, he sent to the parish a request for dismission in as brief a note as he could have written.

Mr. Tyler returned to Boston, where he lived until his death in 1775. After his departure, the parish seems to have made no immediate effort to secure a minister, a considerable time being required to pay the large sum awarded to Mr. Tyler. Bitter feelings, also, had been stirred up in the parish; and it was not easy to bring the congregation again into harmony of action. No money was voted for preaching in 1773; but in March, 1774, Deacon Ichabod Gay, William Ellis, Jr., and Isaac Whiting were appointed a committee "to signify to the second precinct in Dedham, if it be their mind, to congregate together for three months on Lords Days, from April next, in their meeting house one and one in ours successively." There is no intimation in the records that this proposed action was carried out. In September twenty-five pounds only were voted for preaching, and at a meeting in December a movement was made towards having no preaching for three months in the winter. This proposition was voted down; but those who favored it were in the majority at the March meeting of 1775, when it was decided to have preaching for only eight months in the year, and a committee was appointed to determine which those should be. The bad feeling in the parish gradually lessened; and in 1776 the usual amount of money was appropriated for preaching, and this was the case until a minister was settled in 1779.

From the treasurer's book, it has been ascertained that the pulpit was supplied in 1775 by Benjamin Guild, Mr. Coggin, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Shaw, and Mr. Haven; in 1776, by Mr. Barnerd, Mr. Adams, Mr. Sanger, Mr. Eliot, Mr. Chickering, and Samuel Kingsbury; in 1777, by Mr. Hayward, Mr. Ripley, Mr. Ganet, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Morey; in 1778, by Mr. Thacher, Mr. Bradford, Mr. Daniels, and Mr. Balentine; in 1779, by Mr. Daniels and Mr. Hutchinson. Some of these men preached in more than one year. Several of them were neighboring clergymen, while one or two of them have become known to fame. The small-pox, in a very destructive form, ravaged the parish in 1775; and a large number of persons died. This probably added to the delay in calling a minister.

HYDE PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The parish did not neglect to provide for the education of its children. In 1717, the town voted to have the school kept in several localities; and a committee was appointed to determine on them. In 1720, the town school was held for six or more weeks of each year near the house of John Richards, for six months near the first parish meeting-house, and for six weeks near the house of a Mr. Chamberlain. It was one of the duties of the selectmen to determine for how long a time the school should be kept in each of these places, but one master being provided, who at first received forty pounds and then sixty pounds for his services. The following is one among many entries on the town records in regard to this travelling school, on this occasion the subject coming before the town meeting: —

March 4, 1723.— It was further proposed to the town if it be their mind to have the school removed to a place near the house of John Richards the months of October, November and December, and near the house of John MacNab the months of January, February and March. Voted in the affirmative.

Both these places were within the limits of the parish soon after created, the school being held in the summer months near the meeting-house. In 1756, the town voted to apportion the school money to each of the parishes. The proportion of the west parish was ten pounds nine shillings and ninepence. The first mention of schools in the parish records was in 1753, when an article was inserted in the warrant: —

4. To act what shall be thought proper respecting the school house and schooling in said precinct.

The parish declined by its vote to take any action, probably because it thought this matter properly belonged to the town. It would seem, however, by the wording of the warrant, that a school-house had been built or that there was a proposition to build. Similar action was taken in 1758, when the warrant asked if an inquiry should be made as to how that part of the school money belonging to the precinct was laid out. In 1760, an article was in the war-

rant "to see if the precinct will lay out part of the school money for a woman's school"; but it was dismissed with the article calling for overseers to take care of the boys. In 1769, mention is made of a school-house near the house of Oliver Holmes; and this was called the "old school-house" in the records. In 1770, it was proposed to divide the school money equally between the three school-houses, and money was voted to "the proprietors of the new school-house near Capt. Daniel Gay's." In 1779 there were four schools, as the following action indicates: —

Voted the school money shall be divided into four parts according to what each part pays, in the following manner, viz: the North part, including Timothy Baker and Lt. John Richards; the West part, Timothy Baker, Jr. and Timothy Bullard; the South part, Lt. Joseph Ellis and Benjamin Fairbanks; the East part, Nathaniel Fisher and Peletiah Herring.

In 1784, the parish was asked to give liberty to set a school-house on land belonging to the parish. Among the loose parish papers is one dated 1784, referring to a school near the meeting-house; and those families living in the vicinity opened a school there in that year. This is the agreement entered into: —

DEDHAM, third precinct, Jan 11, 1784.

We, the subscribers, mutually agree to purchase the house near the clapboard tree meeting house for a proprietors school, and to pay the sums affixed to our names, and to comply with all such regulations as shall be hereafter specified. To this were signed the following names: Ichabod Ellis, Theodore Gay, Timothy Smith, Jonathan Onion, Timothy Baker, Henry Glover, David Ellis, Seth Gay, Eliphalet Baker, David Fairbanks, Joseph Gay, Nathaniel Whiting, Samuel Star, Samuel Colburn, Jr., Samuel French.

In 1786, the following entry was made: "The precincts proportion of school money for the year 1785 £30 17 3, divided as follows: North school, £8 3 1; East school, £7 5 5; South school, £8 2 8; West school, £6 2 3; Benjamin Fairbanks, £1 3 10." Similar entries were made until 1796, when the name of Oliver Ellis appears as a recipient of a proportion of the school money, the sum of about

thirty pounds being annually received from the town by the parish during all the later years of the eighteenth century. The North School was probably located on Summer Street, the West School near the present Baptist church, the South School not far from the Union School of to-day, and the East School in the neighborhood of the present Fisher School-house. For many years, beginning about the end of the century, the Bridenno Fund supported a school near the meeting-house, which was taught by a woman, in accordance with the provision of the will by which it was established.

In the year 1764, the parish was given a sum equal to about one hundred dollars, for the purpose of establishing a school near the meeting-house. It is an indication that the subject of education had attracted the attention of the people, that this gift should have been made by a woman. As a curious expression of the mixture of religious and secular thought at that time, a part of the will in which this gift was made is worthy of notice:—

In the name of God, Amen. I, Susanna Bridenno, of Dedham in the County of Suffolk, in New England, singlewoman, being very sick and weak in body but of a perfect mind and memory, (thanks be given unto God!) calling unto mind the mortality of my body and knowing that it is appointed for all men to die, do make and ordain this my last will and testament; that is to say,

Principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hand of Almighty God that gave it, and my body I recommend to the earth to be buried in decent Christian burial at the discretion of my executor, nothing doubting but that at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God; and, as touching such worldly state wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me, I give, demise and dispose of the same in the following manner and form:

In primis: All my just debts and funeral charges being well and truly paid by my executor, my will is, and I do hereby give and demise to the Clapboard Tree precinct in Dedham all my estate that lies in money, notes, bonds, and book-debts, excepting the articles hereafter mentioned, for the use of the parish forever. The use of said money is to be laid out in a woman's school near the meeting house, and the committee of said precinct and their successors in said office are to have the care of said money and to see that the use of said money be laid out for the use above mentioned annually.

For a period of thirty or forty years, beginning near the end of the last century, a school was kept in the meeting-house with the proceeds of this fund. The income from it was only seven or eight dollars a year, but with this sum a teacher was procured for a period of from three to six weeks each summer. This school was taught from 1801 to 1810 by Rebecca Ellis, Mary Fairbanks, Sela Baker, Fanny Ellis, and Betsy Shepherd. From 1811 to 1817, the teachers were Lydia Newell, Mrs. Mary Colburn, Polly Baker, and Mrs. Hannah Richards. From 1821 to 1828 it was taught by Mrs. Delia White, Cornelia S. Dwight, and Deborah Baker; and from 1831 to 1841 the teachers were Rebecca Ellis, Elizabeth White, and Mrs. Lydia D. White. The school was not opened every year, for the amount of the fund was not sufficient to make this possible. For the year 1830, the interest was added to the salary of Mr. White. By this time there was no longer a need of such a school, and from 1844 the fund was devoted to providing books for the Sunday-school library.

During that period in the history of the parish which we have now considered, six of its young men graduated from Harvard College,—then, as now, a very large proportion of a population of less than four hundred. The first of these was Ebenezer Gay,* born in 1718, graduated in 1737, settled in Suffield, Conn., in 1742, where he was the minister for fifty-four years. He was made a doctor of divinity, and was called an "able and learned divine." His brother, Bunker Gay, was born in 1735, graduated in 1760, and was settled over the church in Hinsdale, N.H., in 1763. In 1793, he gave a Thanksgiving sermon in verse, from which these lines are taken: —

> Our equal government and laws,
> Thro' the wide world gain vast applause;
> In almost every foreign nation
> These are preached up for imitation.
>
> Our guilt, my friends, must be prodigious,
> If freedom, civil and religious,
> And all the blessings it imparts,
> Make no impression on our hearts.

*See *New England Historic-Genealogical Register* for January, 1879: "John Gay of Dedham, Mass., and some of his Descendants."

Samuel Kingsbury was born in 1736, graduated in 1759, and became the minister at Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard. Joshua Fisher was born in 1748, graduated in 1766, and was a physician in Ipswich and Beverly. He was on the Ipswich Revolutionary Committee of Correspondence, a president of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and endowed a professorship of Natural History at Harvard. His interest in the Clapboard Trees parish continued active throughout his life; and he gave the parish three thousand dollars, as well as a bell. The next graduate was Phillip Draper, born in 1757, graduated in 1780, and was a physician in South Dedham, dying in 1817. His brother, Ichabod Draper, was born in 1755, graduated in 1783, and was settled in 1785 over a church in Amherst. He resigned in 1809, but lived in Amherst until his death in 1827. Caleb Ellis was born in 1767, graduated in 1793, and in 1800 settled at Claremont, N.H., to the practice of the law. He was a representative, senator, and counsellor, a representative in Congress and a justice in the Supreme Judicial Court of New Hampshire.

It was not many years after the separate life of the parish began before the people wished to have a place of their own for the burial of their dead. In March, 1745, this action was taken: —

> It was put: to see if it be the mind of the precinct that Joseph Ellis, Deacon Ellis & Deacon Onion be a comttee to agree and purchase a piece of land of Joseph Colburn Junr. for a burying place for sd precinct. Pass: in the affirm:

The parish records give no evidence that this action was carried out. Mr. Locke says that the parish purchased half an acre of land of Nathan Kingsbury in 1752 for a burial-place; but it is likely to have been a year or two earlier. In March, 1747, this record was made: —

> It was put: to see if it be the mind of the precinct to grant thirty pounds old tenor to buy a burying cloth, and choose a comttee to buy ye same. Pass: in affirm: Deacon Jos. Ellis, Nathaniel Colburn, comttee.

Tradition would have it that the burial-ground was not purchased without serious differences of opinion as to the

best location. It is said that on one occasion, when Mr. Tyler was attempting to reconcile two contending parishioners, who were engaged in an angry dispute on the subject, one of them said, "I'll never be buried in that burying-ground as long as I live and breathe." The other replied, "Well, if God Almighty spares my life, I will." John Buckmaster, who died Jan. 12, 1752, in his seventy-first year, was the first person whose body was laid in this burying-ground. In 1848, the citizens of the parish erected a monument to his memory. The first head-stone erected, that is now standing in its place, bore the following inscription: —

HERE LYES
YE BODY OF
MRS MARY
COLBURN
AGED ABOUT
89 DIED JEN
30–1752

In this inscription, the month is indicated by the letters JEN, which were probably intended for January. This may have been the second interment. There are no quaint or curious inscriptions in the burying-ground. The following, which appears on several head-stones, and frequently in other cemeteries, is to be found over the grave of Ebenezer Kingsbury, who died Sept. 3, 1775, aged seventy-two years:

Behold & see, as You pass by;
As You are now, so once was I;
As I am now so must You be:
Prepare for Death & follow me.

In 1780, the number of families in the parish was seventy-one, and the population was less than four hundred. Joseph Richards, the first clerk of the parish, was succeeded in that office by Isaac Whiting, who held the position from 1756 to 1766. Deacon Ichabod Gay was the clerk of the parish from 1767 to 1793. He was succeeded in 1794 by Nathaniel Kingsbury, who held the office until 1798. In 1799 and the succeeding year, Benjamin Fairbanks was clerk and Eben-

ezer Fisher, in 1801–2. Previous to the coming of Mr. Thacher to the parish in 1780, the first deacons had been succeeded by Ichabod Gay and Ichabod Ellis. Deacon Gay died in 1814, at the age of ninety-one, and Deacon Ellis in 1811, at the age of sixty-nine. Ichabod Gay was born in 1723, had for his wives Elizabeth King and Lucy Richards, was a selectman in 1775 and for the three succeeding years, and was a soldier in the Revolutionary war. The destruction of the church records makes it impossible to give the dates when the deacons were elected or how long they served, and without them it is also impossible to give the dates of births and deaths in many instances.

The parish records furnish no evidence that the precinct sent any men to the French and Indian wars; but, as the south or Tiot parish did so, it is quite probable the Clapboard Trees may have furnished both men and money. A military company was formed in the parish soon after its legal existence began. In November, 1754, according to the report made to the colonel of militia, the company consisted of a full list of officers and ninety-seven privates. The captain was Joseph Richards; first lieutenant, Daniel Draper; second lieutenant, Joseph Richards, Jr.; ensign, John Jones. The sergeants were Samuel Colburn, Joseph Dean, Samuel Fisher, and John Chickering; the corporals, Hezekiah Allen, Jr., Oliver Bacon, John Richards, Jr., and Ichabod Gay. The drummers were John Colburn and Abiathar Richards, and the clerk was Eliphalet Baker. Among the privates were twelve by the name of Ellis, eight Drapers, the same number of Gays, six Colburns, five each by the name of Battle and of Richards, and four each who were named Kingsbury, Whiting, Fisher, and Chickering. The last name on the list was that of the Rev. Andrew Tyler. This company must have included on its roster nearly all the able-bodied men in the parish. In this, as in other parishes, training day became a holiday occasion, and almost equal to Thanksgiving. But the day was not one of mere sport, for it helped greatly in training men for the coming struggle with Great Britain.

That period we have been considering was a formative one in the history of the parish as well as in that of the country. Through dissensions and religious controversies, the people were seeking a higher religious expression and more of freedom in the management of religious affairs. The troubles in the Clapboard Trees parish were the troubles in most of the parishes, and they were mild compared with those in some other towns. The spirit of liberty was growing, and it came at last to full fruition. In the preaching of Andrew Tyler there was preparation for that of Thomas Thacher, whose Arminianism led finally to the Unitarianism of later years. On this quiet country side there lived men and women who prized learning, and who gave their children the best the country afforded. We should be glad to know what books men read in those days in this parish and what they were saying on the political and religious questions of the day; but, in the absence of such information, we can be sure they lived good lives and served their country truly, whether on the farm or with the Continental Army.

V.

THE PARISH IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

We have now arrived at the time of the struggle for American independence, and the slowness in calling a minister may have been caused in large degree by the concentration of all the energies of the parish upon that effort for liberty. The Clapboard Trees precinct bore an honorable part in raising money and in furnishing men, and the records would indicate that the spirit of patriotism burned strong and steadfast among the people. A complete account of what was done by the precinct cannot be obtained from the parish records, for it bore its share in what was done by the town as well as in its own capacity as a precinct. It provided itself with firearms in 1777, in order to be ready for any emergency; but there is no account of its separate action at Lexington and Concord, as its men joined with those of the first and second precincts. A meeting of the parish, held in May, 1778, affords a curious illustration of the time. At that meeting, two subjects were up for consideration,— the hiring of money to enable the parish to provide its quota of men and the cutting of the bushes on the parish lands. The money was voted, but it was decided to permit the bushes to grow. It was not a time then for cutting bushes. Men were needed for a more important service.

At a meeting of the parish, held in October, 1777, it was decided to take into consideration all the services rendered in the parish from the beginning of the war, in order that all the men might be properly compensated, and a committee was appointed to report on the subject; and there now exists among the parish papers the schedule this committee drew up of the men who served and the sum of

money to be paid to each. All the entries on the records concerning the war, including the above-mentioned schedule, are here printed in full: —

October 22, 1777.— Voted to take into consideration all the services done in this precinct since April, 1775, respecting the present war, in order that there may be an average made by way of tax.

Voted to choose a committee to estimate said services. Voted to choose three for said committee; chose Ichabod Gay, Capt. Isaac Colburn and Mr. Ebenezar Smith.

Voted and granted the sum of eighteen pounds, fifteen shillings to pay for fire arms.

Voted to add two to the committee already chosen to estimate the services done the present war; chose Capt. Abel Richards and Lt. Joseph Ellis.

November 5, 1777.— The committee chose to estimate the services done in this precinct respecting the present war exhibited a report, which was accepted and is on file.

Voted and granted the sum of six hundred and twenty pounds to be levied on the polls and ratable estates in this precinct to defray the charge of the present war.

DEDHAM, Novr. 5th, 1777.

We, the subscribers, being chose a committee to estimate the services done in this precinct since April 1775, respecting the present war, have attended said services and report as follows, viz: sums of money paid:

Joseph Gay,	£9	0	0
Moses Gay,	6	0	0
Joseph Draper,	6	0	0
Benjamin Fairbanks,	11	0	0
Theodore Gay,	15	0	0
Lt. Nathaniel Colburn,	6	0	0
Lt. John Richards,	6	0	0
Jeremiah Baker,	5	0	0
Jonathan Onion,	7	0	0
Enoch Kingsbury,	7	0	0
Ichabod Gay,	12	0	0
Fisher Whiting,	10	0	0
Isaac Colburn,	10	0	0
Abner Ellis,	10	0	0
David Ellis,	5	0	0
Joseph Ellis,	6	0	0
William Ellis,	10	0	0
Job Buckmaster,	5	0	0
Timothy Bullard,	7	0	0

Timothy Colburn,	5	0	0
Jonathan Ellis,	5	0	0
Ichabod Ellis,	5	0	0
Timothy Draper,	6	0	0
Oliver Ellis,	6	0	0
Samuel Pettee,	6	0	0
David Colburn,	3	0	0
Ichabod Colburn,	3	0	0
Eliakim Richards,	6	0	0
William Gay,	5	0	0
Seth Gay,	2	0	0
Capt. Abel Richards,	2	10	0
Josiah Gay,	5	0	0
Eliphalet Baker,	5	0	0
John Colburn, Jr.,	5	0	0
Jonathan Colburn,	5	0	0
Isaac Everett,	5	0	0
Thomas Buckmaster,	5	0	0
Nathan Ellis,	5	0	0
Henry Glover,	5	0	0
Ebenezar Gay,	8	0	0
Nathaniel Whiting,	1	0	0
	£256	10	0

That the men that served at or near Boston in 1775 eight months recieve the sum of £2 8 0 each man. £24 0 0.

Their names: Andrew Lewis, Nathan Colburn, Lewis Colburn, Peletiah Herring, John Carbe, Henry Glover for Simeon Colburn, Joseph Baker, Benjamin French, William Fairbanks, Thomas Colburn; and Joseph Dean Jr., and Peletiah Herring Jr., for four months, the sums of £1 4 0 each. £2 8 0.

The men that served in 1776 in the Continental service at York and Ticonderoga recieve the sum of £18 0 0 each. Their names: Lt. John Gay and Wm. Fairbanks. £36 0 0.

That Ebenezar Fisher that served five months at Ticonderoga recieve the sum of £10 0 0.

That Nathaniel Fisher Jr. recieve the sum of £5 0 0.

That John Buckmaster recieve the sum of £4 0 0.

MONEY PAID.

Capt. David Fairbanks, deceased,	£2	0	0
Eliphalet Baker Jr.,	5	0	0
Timothy Smith,	4	10	0
Ebenezar Smith,	8	0	0
Timothy Baker Jr.,	5	0	0
	24	10	0
Nathaniel Whiting,	6	0	0
	30	10	0

To hire men to go to Ticonderago, . .	£157	10	0
To hire men to go to Tiverton, . . .	57	12	0
Sum total, ...	£598	2	0
Ichabod Gay, by order, ...	4	8	0
	602	10	0

November 5th 1777.— It was put: to see if it be the mind of the precinct to accept the forgoing report; passed in the affirmative. Attest, Ichabod Gay, Precinct Clerk.

Decr. 1777.— Each man £2 12 0 first eight months.

March, 1778.— Capt. John Gay £5; Nathan Lewis £18 10; John Andrews £5.

December 22, 1777.— Voted to choose a committee to procure men for the service of the present war, when legally called for. Voted to choose five for said committee; chose Capt. Abel Richards, Lt. Joseph Ellis, Lt. Nathaniel Colburn, Capt. Daniel Gay and Deacon Ichabod Gay. Voted that this committee continue until next March.

Voted that the men that are now in the service of the war be paid out of the precinct treasury.

It was put; to see if it be the mind of the precinct to allow the men that served eight months in the war in the year 1775 any further compensation. Passed in the affirmative. Voted to allow each man two pounds twelve shillings in addition to what they have been allowed.

Voted and granted the sum of one hundred pounds to hire men for the service of the present war.

March 16, 1778.— Voted to choose a committee to hire men to go into the service of the war when legally called for. Voted to choose five for said committee; chose David Ellis, Lt. John Gay, Jonathan Colburn, Lewis Colburn and Nathaniel Whiting.

March 23, 1778.— Voted to allow Lt. John Gay five pounds for his service in the war eight months in the year 1775. It was put; to see if it be the mind of the precinct to allow Lt. John Gay the further sum of five pounds for his service twelve months in the war. Passed in the negative.

It was put; to see if it be the mind of the precinct to allow Nathan Lewis thirteen pounds ten shillings for his service in the Continental army in the year 1776, which sum, together with £4 10 0 which his father has been abated in the war tax, makes the sum of £18 0 0, being equal to grants made to others, namely, Lt. John Gay and Wm. Fairbanks. Passed in the negative.

Voted to allow Nathan Lewis the sum of eleven pounds fifteen shillings for his service in the war in the year 1776.

Voted and granted the sum of four hundred pounds to defray the charge of the war the ensuing year.

Voted to excuse the committee chosen to hire men for the service

of the war, according to their desire. Voted to choose a committee to hire men to go into the service of the war when legally called for. Voted to choose three; chose Capt. Daniel Gay, Joseph Draper and Ichabod Gay.

May 13, 1778.— Voted to empower Joseph Gay, precinct treasurer, to hire money on behalf of the parish to enable the committee to hire men for the service of the war.

September 9, 1778.— Voted and granted the sum of twelve hundred pounds to defray the charge of hiring men for the service of the war.

March 8, 1779.— Voted to allow Ichabod Gay his account of £6 18 0 for his service in hiring men for the war. Voted to allow Capt. Daniel Gay £6 18 0 for his service. Voted to choose a committee to reckon with the committee that was chose to hire men for the service of the war. Voted to choose three; chose Capt. Abel Richards, Capt. Isaac Colburn and Mr. Enoch Kingsbury.

Voted and granted the sum of five hundred pounds to hire men for the service of the war. Voted to choose a committee to hire men for the war when legally called for. Voted to choose three for said committee; chose Deacon Ichabod Gay, Capt. Daniel Gay and Deacon Ichabod Ellis.

Voted to allow Capt. Abel Richards his service in the war in the year 1778 the same price a soldier had that went with him from this parish.

June 17, 1779.— Voted and granted the sum of one thousand pounds to defray the charge of hiring men for the service of the war.

Voted to allow Benjamin Fairbanks a further sum of four pounds for service done in the war.

June 27, 1783.— Voted to allow Mr. Nathaniel Fisher Jr., the sum of one pound five shillings as a further compensation for his service in the war.

March 12, 1787.— Voted and directed the committee to give orders to the men that advanced money for the soldiers lately called for by government.

It was not until 1788 that all the money borrowed for the hiring of soldiers had been paid. In 1785, Ebenezer Fisher and Nathaniel Fisher were paid for services in the war; and in 1786 compensation was made to Abagail Pratt for her son, Benjamin Andrews, and Jonathan Onion.

During the period of the war, and for some time afterwards, the people must have been very poor, as the result of the depreciation of the Continental money, and because the usual avenues of trade were closed. Paper money so far

lost its value that in November, 1780, the parish voted to receive gold and silver at the rate of one pound for seventy-five pounds paper money. The parish records afford two or three interesting illustrations of this depreciation in money values. Deacon Ichabod Ellis was paid two hundred pounds for boarding Mr. Thacher seven weeks in 1779 or 1780. In March, 1781, Eliphalet Baker was paid fifty-four pounds for one cord of wood for the use of Mr. Thacher, and Timothy Baker was paid forty-eight pounds for two loads of wood for the same purpose. A little later in the same year, Capt. Abel Richards and Job Buckmaster were each paid twenty-seven pounds for a load of wood for Mr. Thacher. In 1782, the parish accounts seem to have been kept on the basis of gold; for, in the latter part of that year, only six and seven shillings per cord were paid for wood. In the year 1780 and 1781, when the parish paid Mr. Thacher sixty pounds each year as a settlement gratuity, they voted to raise 4,125 pounds for this purpose. Such was the difference between gold and paper, which was as one to sixty-eight and three-fourths.

In the archives at the State House are preserved the muster rolls of many of the companies which served on the 19th of April, 1775, and at later periods during the Revolution. Three companies went from the Clapboard Trees on the 19th of April, the muster rolls of which are there preserved. These were led by Daniel Draper, Daniel Fairbanks, and William Ellis; and the rank, days of service, miles travelled, and pay allowed were carefully recorded and sworn to by the captain of each company. It is possible that all the men forming these three companies were not from the Clapboard Trees, but most of them must have been residents of the parish. In some instances, Clapboard Trees men served in other Dedham companies. In order to make this record as complete as possible, these muster rolls are here reproduced in full: —

A list of a Company that marched from the third parish in Dedham, in the alarm occasioned by the Lexington battle, on April 19, 1775, under the command of Capt. Daniel Draper in Col. Davis' Regiment.

	Miles distance.	Days allowed.	Total.
Daniel Draper, Capt.,	24	6	1 7 8 2
Nathan Ellis, Serj.,	24	6	12 3 1
Tim. Draper, Serj.,	24	4	8 10 1
Job Buckmaster,	24	4	7 8 2
David Ellis,	24	6	10 6 3
Amasa Farrington,	24	2	4 10 1
Ezra Gay,	24	6	10 6 3
Jerem Baker,	24	2	4 10 1
Enoch Kingsbury,	24	4	7 8 2
Jon[a] Onion,	24	2	4 10 1
Aaron Ellis,	24	2	4 10 1
Sam[l] Colburn, Jr.,	24	2	4 10 1
William Gay,	24	2	4 10 1
Jon[a] Whiting,	24	2	4 10 1
Simeon Colburn,	24	2	4 10 1
John Colburn,	24	6	10 6 3
Joseph Dean,	22	2	4 10 1
And[w] Lewis,	24	2	4 10 1
Fisher Whiting,	24	2	4 10 1
Daniel Gay,	24	2	4 10 1
Seth Gay,	24	1	3 5
Jonathan Ellis,	24	2	4 10 1
Isaac Whiting,	24	2	4 10 1
Nathaniel Colburn,	24	4	7 8 2
			£8. 15. 0½

Suffolk ss Januy 5, 1776. Then Capt. Daniel Draper came before me and made oath that the above muster roll is just and true according to his knowledge.

Before Nat. Sumner, Justice of the Peace.

DEDHAM, December the 14th, 1775.

A list of a Party of Soldiers in a Militia Company in Dedham, under the command of David Fairbanks, and in Col. Heath's Reg[t], that was in the Service on the alarm the 19th April, 1775.

Names.	Rank.	Days service.	Amount.
David Fairbanks,	Capt.	2	£0 8 6½
Jonathan Colburn,	Lieut.	2	0 7 10½
Joseph Draper,	Serjt.	2	0 5 7
Joseph Dean,	Corpl.	2	0 5 3
Oliver Ellis,	Corpl.	2	0 5 3
Abel Richards,	Private	2	0 5
Daniel Smith,	"	2	0 5
Ezra Gay,	"	2	0 5
Samuel Colburn,	"	2	0 5
John Farrington,	"	2	0 5

Timothy Baker, ...	Private	2	0	5
Samuel Baker, ...	"	2	0	5
Abner Smith, ...	"	2	0	5
Lemuel Herring, ...	"	2	0	5
			£3	17 6

DAVID FAIRBANKS, Capt.

COLONY MASSACHUSETTS BAY, Jan. the 25th, 1776.

David Fairbanks made solemn oath that this roll, by him subscribed, is true in all its parts, according to the best of his knowledge.

Before Samuel Hatten, Justice Peace, thro' the Colony.

A Muster Roll of the Company under the command of Capt. William Ellis of Col. Heath's Regiment, 1775.

Mens names.	Rank.	Travel miles.	Time of service.	Whole amount.	
William Ellis, ...	Capt.	36	9 days.	2 5 7½	
Jonathan Colburn, ...	Lt.	36	5	18 9½	
Joseph Ellis, ...	Serj.	36	4	11 6½	
Benj. Fairbanks, ...	"	36	8	18 4½	
Ebenezer Fisher, ...	"	36	9	1 0 1	
Eliphalet Baker, ...	Corp.	36	4	10 10	
Oliver Ellis, ...	"	36	2	7 9	
William Gay, ...	"	36	4	10 10½	
Timothy Baker, ...	Private	36	2	7 3	
Timothy Smith, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
David Smith, ...	"	36	6	12 11	
Abner Smith, ...	"	36	2	7 3	
Jonathan Whiting, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
Ebenezer Herring, ...	"	36	8	15 9	
Ichabod Colburn, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
Simeon Colburn, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
Abel Richards, ...	"	36	9	11 6	
John Richards, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
Seth Gay, ...	"	36	4	10 1	
Samuel (?) Baker, ...	"	36	5	11 6	
Ezra Gay, ...	"	36	1	5 10	
John Farrington, ...	"	36	5	11 6	
Nathaniel Whiting, ...	"	36	5	11 6	
Fisher Whiting, ...	"	36	5	11 6	
Isaac Everett, ...	"	36	9	17 2	
Samuel Pettee, ...	"	36	5	11 6	
Samuel Gay, ...	"	36	2	7 3	
David Dean, ...	"	36	3	8 8	
Nathaniel Baker, ...	"		5	7 1	in the Army.
Jonathan Onion, ...	"		3	4 3	"
Isaac Comecher, ...	"		9	12 9	"
				£20 14 1½	

Errors excepted, WM. ELLIS.

Middlesex ss Decem. 20, 1775. The above named William Ellis made solemn oath that the above Muster Roll, by him subscribed, is just and true in all its parts.

Before me, Moses Gill, Justice Peace, thro' the province.

On the 19th of April, the alarm came by a messenger who passed through Needham and Dover. The militia companies had long been in training, and were ready to march on the shortest notice. When the alarm was given, the men at once dropped every employment, and mustered rapidly at Dedham village. From there they marched to the scene of action, the company of each parish acting for itself or joining the regiment to which it belonged. The alarm came at nine o'clock, and the three hundred Dedham men joined in the attack on the British soldiers as they retreated from Concord and Lexington. No one from the Clapboard Trees was either wounded or killed.

At the close of the war, the people were in a condition of poverty. The chief articles of food were potatoes, salted pork, and corn meal. In one family, seven pounds of wheat flour were bought as a special Thanksgiving luxury. In the same family, the only way of securing money for the payment of taxes, which were very heavy, was by going into the woods of the father and his sons for several days, burning a pit of charcoal, and carting that to Boston with an ox-team, sleeping under the cart for one night on the trip, and eating the scanty meals which were taken from home. On one such journey to Boston, the father advised his sons to go to England, for this country, he said, was ruined, and it would never know prosperity again.

VI.

SETTLING A NEW MINISTER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the continuance of the war, and the financial depression which went with it, in the autumn of 1779 the parish repaired its meeting-house and called a minister. At a meeting held Oct. 18, 1779, the parish voted unanimously to concur with the church in calling Thomas Thacher to that office. From the treasurer's book, it would appear that Mr. Thacher first preached in the Clapboard Trees parish in the summer of 1778; for, in September of that year, it is recorded that he was paid ten pounds for preaching. In December, he was paid seventeen pounds; but he did not preach again until the following summer, when in July he was paid twenty-seven pounds. The young man, just from his studies, was not hastily decided upon; and he did not hastily accept the request to become the minister of the parish. On the part of the parish there was the difficulty of the financial depression and the stagnation of all business to contend with; and there was also the remembrance of the troubles with Mr. Tyler. Both of these appear in the action taken by the parish at a meeting held Nov. 5, 1779. At this time, the following items of business were transacted, as appears from the records: —

Voted that the parish will maintain Mr. Thomas Thacher honorably while he shall remain our minister; and as the state of our currency is so fluctuating and uncertain at present that we are at a loss to determine what sum will be sufficient for that purpose, we desire him, if he has any inclination to settle with us, to confer upon the premises with the committee we shall choose for that purpose. Also voted, for the reasons above-said, that it is our desire, further, that the said committee confer with Mr. Thacher with regard to an encouragement to him to settle among us.

Also voted and come to the following resolve, that, whereas, there are sometimes great dissensions between Minister and people, which we earnestly pray may never be the case with us, yet should that happen, and Mr. Thacher should desire a separation, he has liberty by this our proposal to a discharge of his pastoral office among us. On the other hand, if the major part of the precinct shall any time in future by their handwriting signify to him their desire of a dissolution of his pastoral office among us he shall consent thereto. However, in either case, disinterested men are to judge of the terms, all parties and circumstances to be heard and considered. Nevertheless, all methods for peace and reconciliation, as pointed out in the Gospel, are to be pursued for peace and harmony.

The committee chosen to confer with Mr. Thacher consisted of Capt. Daniel Draper, Mr. Eliphalet Baker, Mr. Joseph Gay, Deacon Ichabod Gay, Capt. Daniel Gay, Mr. Abner Ellis, and Mr. Nathaniel Whiting. Much difficulty seems to have been met with in making satisfactory arrangements, for the parish held no less than eight adjourned meetings during the winter before it arrived at a final decision. At a meeting held Feb. 14, 1780, it came to the following conclusions: —

Voted to grant Mr. Thomas Thacher one hundred and ten pounds lawful money as an encouragement for him to settle with us, to be paid to him one-half in the year 1780, the other half in the year 1781, in gold or silver or the value thereof in Continental currency as the exchange shall be at the time of payment, as also reference being had to the price of land at the time aforesaid.

Voted Mr. Thacher shall have the improvement of the six acres of land which belongs to the precinct so long as he is our Minister.

Voted to supply Mr. Thacher with fire-wood for his own use so long as he shall remain our Minister, to be delivered at his dwelling, not exceeding twenty-five cords per year.

Whereas, the precinct have voted to support Mr. Thacher honorably while he is our Minister, but have not mentioned any sum for that purpose, therefore, as an explanation thereof,

Voted and granted Mr. Thacher sixty-seven pounds lawful money annually, to be paid in the proportion hereafter mentioned, viz: beef at twenty shillings per hundred weight, rye at four shillings per bushel and Indian corn at three shillings four pence per bushel, sheeps wool at one shilling four pence per pound and sole leather at one shilling two pence per pound; and, whereas the war is very distressing to the people, we do reserve a right to deduct one-third (or any part of said third) part of

said sixty-seven pounds during the present war with Great Britain, and two years after said war shall cease.

After nearly two months more of deliberation, Mr. Thacher sent the following acceptance, here reproduced with the spelling and punctuation of the parish records: —

To the Church and Congregation of Christ in Dedham, Clapboard tree Precinct

Brethren,

I have considered the invitation you have given me to settle with you as your Pastor with that attention which the importance of the subject requires. After weighing all circumstances that respect you and myself: and having asked counsel of heaven in this serious affair, I think it my duty to comply with your request.

The difficulty that attends this office is at all times great: and a concurrence of circumstances at this Day render it peculiarly so. The catholic and liberal sentiments among you which I have observed from my earliest acquaintance with you have encouraged me to hope that it will in some degree be lightned. I hope also that the same principles will prevail upon you to exercise that candor and indulgence towards me; of which Youth and Inexperience hath constant occasion.

The offers contained in your votes of the 14th of February last you must be sensible are moderate: The distresses of the country are an apology. I am far from wishing to be exemted from the sufferings of my Brethren, and am as willing to share in their afflictions as to rejoice in their prosperity. In respect to the article where you reserve a right of deducting "one third part of the sum you have voted during the present war and two years after it shall cease" I acquiesce confiding at the same time in your honour and generosety that you will not construe it in a more vigorous sense than what the exigencies of the publick and of individuals shall render necessary.

I earnestly desire your prayers for me that I may be furnished with Wisdom, and Piety and all those gifts and graces needfull for the employment of a gospel Minister in order that I may be usefull to you and to myself. I return you my sincere thanks for your kindness and favorable opinion. May the best of the Divine blessings rest upon you.

I remain your sincere friend.

Thos Thacher

DEDHAM April 4th 1780

Mr. Thacher was ordained on Wednesday, the 4th of June, 1780. The sermon was preached by his brother, the Rev. Peter Thacher of Malden, afterwards of the Brattle Street Church, Boston. The Rev. Samuel West, of Needham, offered the introductory prayer; the Rev. Mr. Robbins, of Milton, gave the charge; the Rev. Josiah Haven, of the first church in Dedham, gave the right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. Mr. Cummings, of Billerica, offered the concluding prayer. The first and second churches in Dedham, the second in Berwick, and the churches in Needham, Dover, Medfield, Malden, Milton, and Billerica were invited to join in the service.

Having settled a minister, the parish went quietly on its way for many years, and during the first twenty-five years of Mr. Thacher's ministry furnished little for the recording pen of the historian. In 1780, "a number of men were chosen to inspect the boys, and in case of misdemeanor, to bring them down to their parents or masters or the hind seat"; which would indicate that the boys were usually seated by themselves in the galleries.

In 1781, committees were appointed by the third and first parishes to establish a line between the two parishes. These committees consisted of Capt. Daniel Gay, Deacon Ichabod Gay, and Mr. Abner Ellis for the third parish, and of Jonathan Metcalf, Esq., Deacon William Avery, and Mr. Isaac Whiting for the first. These committees, having viewed the grounds, decided on a boundary line, which was legalized by an act of the General Court, and which they described as follows: —

> Beginning at the cross ways, so-called, near the dwelling-house of Messrs Ebenezer and Samuel Gay, and running a straight line northwardly or Northwesterly to the Northwest corner of a wood-lot belonging to the church in the first parish in said Dedham, where it meets with Medfield road, so-called, at the Northeast corner of Eliphalet Baker's land, and continuing the same straight line to Rockfield road, so-called; then turning westwardly in said road and running in the same as it is now laid out to the bridge at the cedar swamp so-called, and so on in said road until it meets with the line of Springfield parish in said town.

In 1794, a division line was established between the third and second parishes, which was described as a "course from the house of Asa Fisher, formerly Richard Ellis's, to the center between where the South parish meeting-house formerly stood and the Clapboard Tree meeting-house, North 52½ degrees East."

As indicating the simple life which the people lived, a few items may be gleaned from the clerk's records and the treasurer's book. These are only with reference to the prices of labor and the cheapness of the staple commodities. In March, 1785, Oliver Ellis was paid four pounds for cutting and carting eleven and one-half cords of wood for Mr. Thacher. At this period, nine shillings were paid for sweeping the meeting-house for one year. In the year 1800 Newell Ellis received ninety-nine cents for cutting and delivering one cord of wood, and in 1801 Moses Gay had eleven dollars for ten cords. During the first decade of the present century, two dollars a year were paid for sweeping the meeting-house. In 1808, Thaddeus Gay labored for three and one-half days at the new meeting-house "blowing rock"; and he received five dollars and eighty-three cents therefor. Abner Gay was paid three dollars and fifty cents for the same number of days' labor "on the wall round the new meeting-house." In 1810, eight dollars and twenty-three cents were paid Moses Kingsbury for ringing the bell and taking care of the meeting-house. On the inside of the front cover of the second book of the parish records is posted a schedule of prices at which live stock were valued for purposes of taxation during the earlier part of the century. These were as follows: one cow, $17; one yoke oxen, $50; one horse, $35; one chaise, $50; one swine, $4.

In his historical sermon of 1801, Mr. Thacher gave a few statistics which are of interest. In 1800, the number of houses was eighty-one and the population four hundred. From 1780 to 1800, Mr. Thacher baptized one hundred and forty-nine persons, four of them adults. The deaths were one hundred and twenty-eight. Fifty persons were admitted to the church; of active male members, nineteen. In 1801, the

whole church membership was seventy, twenty-four males and forty-six females. Seventy couples were married during these twenty years.

In 1810, June 7, John Richards and George Ellis were elected deacons by the church. The parish clerks were as follows: Deacon George Ellis, 1803 to 1806, 1808 to 1811, 1814 to 1816, 1818 to 1840; Richard Ellis, in 1807 and in 1817; Nathaniel Whiting, 1812 and 1813. Deacon George Ellis served no less than thirty-four years as the clerk of the parish.

VII.

THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE.

THE meeting-house erected in 1731 had now been in use for more than three-quarters of a century, and was fast becoming unfit for use without extensive repairs. At the March meeting of 1804, a committee was appointed "to examine the meeting-house and see if it be worth repairing, and to estimate the expense as near as may be, and see if they can obtain any land for an opening round the meeting-house." In the spring of 1805, the parish was surveyed for the purpose of ascertaining its geographical centre, that being regarded as the best place for locating a new house. In March, 1805, the report of the committee on repairing the old house was rejected; and it was decided not to repair the old house and not to build a new one. In 1806, at the March meeting, it was decided to build. A committee of three was appointed to ascertain the centre of the parish, and a committee of thirteen to decide upon the most suitable place for locating the meeting-house. At the adjourned meeting of March 24, the report of the committee, that the new house be built on Deacon Ellis's land, was accepted. The committee on surveying the parish was, however, directed "to take the mileage of every family to the meeting-house, and also to the hearse-house; and to take an account of each persons taxes to the nighest of the two mentioned houses." A meeting in April annulled the vote in favor of Deacon Ellis's land; and it was determined to hold another meeting of the parish, "to see if the parish will build a new meeting-house, repair the old one, grant money to defray the expenses or otherwise determine as they may judge expedient." Once more the parish assembled, and this time concluded it was best "to build a meeting-house on or

within three rods of the rock in Deacon Ichabod Ellis's land." Adjourning to September 8, a committee was then chosen to bring before the parish a plan for a new house, and to ascertain on what terms the land voted for could be

MAP MADE IN 1807.

obtained. Reassembling September 29, the committee reported a plan for a house, and that land could be obtained of Deacon Ellis free of expense. It was voted, however, to reconsider the action in favor of Deacon Ellis's land, and "to build a meeting-house at the centre stake or within twenty-five rods of the centre." Notwithstanding this vote, a committee was appointed "to view the ground and find the most suitable place for a meeting-house." In October,

the vote locating at the centre was reconsidered; and it was "resolved that each voter in parish affairs express which of the five places he prefers for first, second and third spot for a meeting-house, viz: where the meeting-house now stands, the rock, the stake, and Fox Hill or the church land." The rock was Deacon Ellis's land, the stake was the centre of the parish, and was near the burying-ground, and the church land was probably south of the old meeting-house toward Pond Plain. At the March meeting of 1807, these places were voted on, with the following result:—

At a meeting of the third parish in Dedham, on a motion to take the sense of the parish respecting a spot to set a meeting-house, 26 appeared in favor of Deacon Ellis's rock or within ten rods of the rock, and 23 against it. On a further motion to set a meeting-house on Mr. Jotham Richards' land, where it was formerly staked out for that purpose, 23 appeared in favor of the spot and 33 against it. Again moved to see which spot they preferred, and 30 appeared in favor of Deacon Ellis's rock and 22 for Mr. Richards' land. It was then moved to set a meeting house on Deacon Ellis's land on the westerly side of Onion's brook near the road; 9 appeared in favor and 39 against it. It was then tried to see how many were in favor of Mr. Frederick Richards' rock; 4 appeared in favor of it. It was then tried for the parish rock, and 10 appeared in favor and 35 against it.

These votes indicated very clearly that the majority of the legal members of the parish were in favor of Deacon Ellis's land; but the minority were determined not to accept that location. Accordingly, it was voted that, "whereas the parish have uniformly voted to build a decent house for public worship (if they could agree on a spot to set the house on), but upon repeated trials they have been so unhappy as not to think alike respecting the most suitable place," therefore it would be better to leave the determination of the location to disinterested persons. Elijah Brigham of Westboro, John How of Dorchester, and John Ellis of Medway were invited to act as a committee for the final adjustment of the dispute. The parish voted "that the committee or major part of them agreeing on a spot, it shall be decisive." This committee was asked to take "the roads, houses and all other local circumstances into view,

and to establish the rock or within ten rods of the rock in Deacon Ellis's land or the hill in Mr. Jotham Richards' land, which shall be the proper place for the house to stand on, and that to be considered by the parish as the only place." This committee met on the 28th of April, at the tavern of Capt. Abner Ellis, and proceeded, according to their report, "to view the dimensions, the several houses and roads of said parish, and the local and relative situation of the inhabitants to each other, and particularly their relative situation to the two proposed places for erecting a new meeting-house; and, after hearing the several representations and statements urged for and against the two proposed places, and duly considering the various circumstances, the interest and the right of the individuals who compose the parish, did unanimously agree and determine, that the rock so-called or within ten rods of the rock, in Deacon Ellis's land, near the old meeting-house, be the place for the third parish to erect their proposed new meeting-house."

The parish assembled May 25, and voted "to set the meeting-house on Deacon Ellis's rock." June 22, it adopted a plan for the new house, selected a committee to ask the town to lay out a road from the burying-ground to the new meeting-house site, and voted to raise three thousand dollars, to be assessed on the polls and estates of the parish, towards building a new meeting-house. Thirty-four favored raising this sum of money, and twenty-seven opposed it. A committee, consisting of Ebenezer Fisher, Willard Gay, Capt. Benjamin Fairbanks, George Ellis, Capt. Jeremiah Baker, John Baker, and Capt. Abner Ellis, was chosen by ballot "to superintend the building a new meeting-house under the direction of the parish." The road asked for was granted by the town, and Nahatan Street was laid out and built in 1807.

The site selected for the meeting-house was one of much beauty. The rock in Deacon Ellis's land was the highest point on Nahatan Hill, and it commanded a wide prospect to the east and south. To the east, Blue Hill was full in view, and Boston harbor could be seen on clear days. To the

south-east lay Canton, to the south the second parish, and beyond it Sharon. The high lands of Walpole could be seen a little to the westward, and still farther in the same direction the hills which lay towards Medfield and Dover. From the door of the meeting-house, a wide extending and beautiful prospect stretched out before the beholder. Hills, forests, and villages made up a scene of quiet loveliness that must have charmed all who looked upon it. Those who desired to have their house of worship located on this spot may not have been influenced by æsthetic considerations, but they could not have failed to take delight in the fair scene it presented as they came up to the Lord's house.

The work of building at once began. It was at first proposed that Eliphalet Baker should build the new house, and he was afterwards paid fifteen dollars for his loss in relinquishing the task. The builder finally selected was Capt. Benjamin Robbins, who was not a resident of the parish.

Those who did not favor the site chosen did not become reconciled, as the work of building the new house went on. The feeling which had been aroused was too strong and bitter to be easily allayed; and in October it took the form of a protest to the parish committee, which was worded as follows: —

To the Committee of the Third Parish in Dedham:

Gentlemen:

We, the subscribers, inhabitants of said parish, request that you would not proceed to assess the three thousand dollars agreed upon for building a meeting-house by a small majority of the parish collected together in June last, and state the following reasons and objections against the assessing thereof:

First. When so many of the inhabitants of said parish have so strong objections to assessing said tax, and proceedings has a great tendency to dismember the parish, and will weaken the parish so that it will be in danger of crumbling to pieces.

Secondly. We consider the meeting illegal and without law, which will naturally bring on many vexatious suits, which will, of course, bring on hate and hating one another and evil surmises, which weakens society and that peace and love which the preached gospel is intended to inculcate.

Thirdly. We consider that there is no collector chosen, nor that the committee have any power to commit the tax (if assessed) to any person whomsoever.

To this protest the names of forty-four members of the parish were signed. As the parish collected the tax and went on with the building of the new house, the protestants carried the question of the legality of the tax to the Supreme Court of the State, where it was decided that it had been made in an illegal manner.

At the March meeting of 1808, the treasurer of the parish was empowered to borrow one thousand dollars (if neces-

THE MEETING-HOUSE BUILT IN 1808.

sary) for the purpose of finishing the new meeting-house. A protest, signed by twenty-two persons, was made against the action of this meeting, "because the parish has proceeded to make a list of voters on the single rate made by the assessor and committed to a constable, without any legal authority by law so to do, and because the assessors have not been sworn agreeable to law; by which reasons many of the inhabitants are deprived of their privileges." At an April meeting, a request was presented by Timothy Baker and others "to see if the parish will build their meeting-

house westerly of the hoop-pole rock (so called) not exceeding forty rods." Various changes in the plans of the house were discussed and accepted. Following the records of this meeting, the clerk inserted this note:—

July 25th, 1808.— At the rising of the sun the people assembled to raise the new meeting-house, and after attending prayers, the raising was begun and finished on the following day.

On the 26th of December, the parish voted a farther tax of two thousand dollars, for the purpose of completing the new house, probably not much more than one-half of the first tax of three thousand dollars having been collected. At this meeting, the parish also

Voted, that a committee of nine be chosen to offer in behalf of the parish, to such as appear dissatisfied with building the new meeting-house, to leave all disputes to disinterested men, with full power to agree on the men and appear before them in behalf of the parish. Messrs. Willard Gay, Deacon Ichabod Ellis, Capt. Jeremiah Baker, Richard Ellis, Joseph Draper, George Ellis, John Baker, Jotham Richards and Samuel French were chosen for said committee.

The parish records give no evidence that this committee was in any degree successful in accomplishing the objects for which it was appointed. Those opposed to the new house had already begun to attend the Baptist meetings in Medfield; and they were not inclined to accept any compromise at so late a date.

The house built was forty-seven feet square, and was planned to contain fifty-three pews on the lower floor. Galleries were built on three sides, box-pews were adopted, and the pulpit was very high. On the 1st of March, 1809, the new house was ready for dedication.

Mr. Thacher preached the last sermon in the old meeting-house; and on the following Sunday, March 1, the new house was dedicated. In the sermon on leaving the old house, he complained of the great changes which had taken place in society since it was erected, which had corrupted the morality and the simple habits of the people. "Fastidious ornaments," he said, "have taken the place of simplicity in dress,

language, and the common intercourse of life. Delicacy is substituted for chastity, party zeal for the fervor and fidelity of private friendship, a pompous display of verbose eloquence for the essentials of a good education and of classic literature. It will not be denied that we have progressed in the fine, and in many of the useful arts, in a manner suitable to the increased opulence and population of the country; but yet a profusion of multiplied luxuries proves our artificial wants and our effeminate habits. In a word, we cannot examine any part of private life without discovering as great an alteration in our sentiments and customs as in our public edifices and private houses. Few traits are seen in these either of primitive simplicity or the manly virtues."

In this judgment, undoubtedly Mr. Thacher was quite too severe on the men and women of his own time; and what he took for corruption was in reality a healthy growth. Many look back on his time as better than ours, just as he thought the time of the first settlers better than that in which he lived. Some of his parishioners complained that he was not as the old-fashioned ministers were, and we often hear precisely the same complaint made to-day. The fact is, that each generation has its own character; and the part of wisdom is to believe in the present, to look forward to the future and not to look back to the past.

Of the first settlers of the parish Mr. Thacher said: —

> This house has stood for seventy-eight years. Not a head which planned, nor hand employed in building it, but what has long been mouldering in the dust. Very few either in the parish or town now survive who then existed, nor is there a single person now living who was then the head of a family. Of those who signed the first church covenant, one only was alive after my settlement in this place. The same has been dead for more than a quarter of a century. Since the above mentioned period, what numbers in this inconsiderable hamlet have been born, formed connections and expired. Families then the most flourishing and prosperous in this parish were long since blasted with misery and depression. And though this place be more stationary than any within my knowledge, as to sameness of names and families, houses and inclosures, yet were the first settlers to rise from the grave they scarcely could trace out their former residence and situation.

He also said a very kind and generous word concerning those who had dissevered their connection with the parish organization: —

> Respecting our brethren who have dissented from us in the location of our new place of worship, our heart's desire and prayer to God is, that between us and them there may be, on terms equally honorable and advantageous, a cordial and radical conciliation. I trust and hope that all of us who assemble together will be ready to make any reasonable sacrifice for attaining so valuable an object. Let all bitterness and wrath and severe censures cease from among us. Let us be clothed with charity, as with a garment. We remember with affection many habits of intimacy and friendship which we have enjoyed with many of them; we admit many good qualities they possess, and the kind offices by some of them expressed. If we should be so unhappy as not to accomplish our desire of christian re-union and association, still let us be ready on our part to express on all occasions the courtesies of life, that interchange of kindness, good neighborhood and friendship due from all citizens to each other, however discordant their local views and their religious opinions.

At the dedication of the new meeting-house, Mr. Thacher preached the sermon, which was devoted to a careful consideration of the reasons why public worship should be maintained; while the introductory prayer was made by the Rev. Jabez Chickering of the south parish, and the concluding prayer by the Rev. Joshua Bates of the first parish. "Two anthems adapted to the occasion," we are told by the local newspaper, "were performed with much taste and excellence by a large choir of musicians, both vocal and instrumental, and soothed and exhilerated with tones of sweet harmony, a numerous and respectable auditory."

The total cost of the new meeting-house seems to have been about five thousand five hundred dollars. The land on which it was located was given, free of any reservations or conditions, by Deacon Ichabod Ellis (three-quarters of an acre) and by his son Newell Ellis (one-quarter of an acre). Six persons subscribed towards providing the house with a bell; but their action was anticipated by the gift of a bell from the Hon. Joshua Fisher, of Beverly. The cost of decorating the pulpit, nearly seventy dollars, was met by the

women of the parish. The materials used for this purpose and in making the cushion, according to the bill now among the parish papers, consisted of five yards moreen, eleven yards fringe, ten yards lace, one tassel, three yards crimson damask, four yards crimson silk fringe, seventeen yards crimson silk lace, three and one-half pounds feathers, one and one-fourth yards tick, and four silk tassels. "I feel myself authorized to declare," said Mr. Thacher, in publishing his two sermons, "that the politeness, christian affection and sympathy expressed by the other societies in the town towards us in our present difficulties has excited the warmest gratitude in the minds of all who assemble with us in public worship."

A committee was chosen to sell the old meeting-house, which was bought by Aaron Baker. It was subsequently taken to pieces, moved to High Street, and there rebuilt and used for public worship by those who had withdrawn from the parish. As rebuilt, it was smaller, but almost exactly like the new house in its interior arrangement and exterior construction.

The spirit of reconciliation expressed itself in October by a committee of seven, chosen "to confer with the west side of the parish respecting a settlement with regard to the meeting-house"; and the committee was instructed "to offer them reasonable pay for the expense they have been at in erecting the old meeting-house, on condition that they return and remain with the parish."

In the spring of 1809, Mr. Thacher, in a communication to the parish meeting, relinquished seventy-five dollars of his salary for the previous year, to be devoted to the expenses of the new house. He expressed a wish to share that expense with his neighbors, and he said the sum given was more by fifteen dollars than his share of the tax. He also denied the report that he had been influential in securing the location of the house on the land of Deacon Ellis. "I think justice to myself," he wrote, "requires me to say, that I never directly or mediately solicited or influenced any man to vote for setting it on the rock."

In the autumn of 1809, horse-sheds were built containing twenty stalls. Stoves were probably put into the new meeting-house soon after it was built, but the first mention of them in the records was in 1818. The meeting-house had no carpets at this period; for, in 1816, Darling Trask was paid sixty-two and one-half cents "for sanding the meeting-house floor."

Those who had withdrawn from the parish not only proceeded to erect a house of their own, and to connect themselves with the Baptist society in Medfield, but they took active measures against being taxed to support the parish within the territorial limits of which they lived. The law required the taxation of every resident of a parish for the support of public worship within that parish, unless he could show evidence that he was a regular attendant upon some other religious services. Accordingly, the following notice was served upon the parish committee: —

We, the subscribers, John Perkins, public teacher of a society of Baptists in Medfield, Ebenezer Clark and Eleazer Perry, having been chosen a special committee of said society to certify who are the members thereof, and who do usually and frequently, when able, attend with us in our meetings for religious worship, do certify that Phinehas Colburn, Benjamin Colburn, Andrew Lewis, Jonathan Colburn, David Baker, Abijah Colburn, Benjamin French, Jun., George Colburn, Joseph Ellis 2nd, James Pettee, Joel Everett, Thacher Colburn, Ichabod Colburn, Abraham Sanderson, Smith Emerson, Isaac Colburn Jun, Benjamin French, Eliphalet Baker, Joseph Draper, Samuel Pettee, Enoch Kingsbury, Eliphalet Colburn, Obed Baker, Daniel Draper, Aaron Baker and Joseph Baker belong to said society, and that they usually and frequently, when able, attend with us in our meetings for religious worship.

Signed, JOHN PERKINS,
EBENEZER CLARK,
ELEAZER PERRY.

MEDFIELD, July 1st, 1809.

A similar notice certified that Isaac Smith, Abijah Smith, John Ellis, Jr., and Abijah Fisher, residents of Walpole, but included for many years in the Clapboard Trees parish, also attended the Baptist meetings in Medfield. In order to make sure of not being taxed, most of the above-named

persons in October sent a notice to the assessors saying that it would be of no use to assess them. They also said, "We neither expect you to help us pay for building our meeting house nor support our public teacher; neither do we intend to assist you in building and supporting yours." In July, 1810, the parish took the following action with reference to these notices: —

> Voted, that the assessors that were chosen in March last be directed to omit in their assessment all such persons belonging to the parish as they shall judge do not consider themselves belonging with our society.

In 1811, June 11, the Baptist society of Dedham and Medfield was incorporated by the General Court. A committee from the General Court visited the parish, and a committee from the parish waited upon it; but nothing could be done to prevent a final separation of the two societies. Why there should have been a division of the parish it is now difficult to understand. The first cause of a difference of opinion was with reference to building a new house. A considerable number, including Mr. Thacher, thought it better to repair the old house. When it was decided to build, the question of locality was an immediate cause of trouble. The longer it was discussed, the greater became the differences of opinion, and the more bitter the feelings engendered. The determination of the majority to adhere to the spot chosen, and the making of the first tax for building the new house in an illegal manner, added fuel to the flame. The whole trouble, in a word, was between the inhabitants of the eastern and the western parts of the parish, as to which should have the house in their own locality. This is plainly indicated by the fact that, of the forty-four persons signing the protest of 1807, thirty-three lived in the western part of the parish. At this time, the roads were so located that either party would have been better accommodated by the locality it preferred. Had Nahatan Street existed when it was first proposed to build, it is possible that the causes of division would have been prevented.

Still another cause of the failure of all efforts at reconcili-

ation was the fact that the parish officers attempted to enforce by the power of the law the collection of the taxes assessed. Those not paying were carried to jail, and the feeling of enmity was deepened thereby. Tradition has it that one man who was arrested lay down on the ground, and had to be loaded into a wagon in order to his removal to the jail. Another was opportunely engaged in shingling his barn at this time; and, whenever the constable appeared for his arrest, he was very busily employed on the topmost part of the roof. When the constable informed him of the errand on which he had come, the delinquent replied that the officer was at liberty to take him where he was. On several occasions, the constable found it prudent to give up his task.* The majority of the parish undoubtedly preferred the locality chosen, but more of the spirit of compromise on their part would have prevented a division of the parish.

When those who had become members of the Baptist church in Medfield were dismissed in 1824 to form the "First Baptist Church in Dedham," an account was given, on the first pages of the church book of the new church, of the causes which led to the division of the Clapboard Trees parish. The writer was perhaps the Rev. Samuel Adlam, the first pastor of the Baptist society. He wrote of the separation as a remarkable instance of the workings of Providence in bringing men to a knowledge of evangelical truth, when they did not desire it. The historical part of this document is here reproduced, for the sake of the light it throws on the causes of the separation. It too strongly emphasizes the lack of evangelical preaching in the parish, for Mr. Thacher was by no means wanting in piety and religious devotion. Those seceding from the parish joined the Baptists because they were not strong enough to support a preacher among themselves, because they could not be formed into a distinct Congregational parish, and because the Baptist society at Medfield afforded them the only oppor-

*Another of the Seceders, who finally returned to the old parish, said that he remained with the Baptists "as long as he could keep up the mad."

tunity within reach for connecting themselves with any other religious body.

The origin of the Baptist church in Dedham strikingly illustrates the providence and sovereignty of God, showing how easy it is for him to place his throne in the midst of his foes, and how he lays hold of the actions of men, without their intention or suspicion, to promote his gospel in the world. The West parish had for a long series of years heard nothing except it were Arminian or Socinian preaching; and so firmly was it established that there is no instance known of its truth being doubted, except by some who verged nearer to infidelity than anything else. . . . The parish was what would by some be called moral; that is, some attended the meeting house constantly, others occasionally, and others very seldom. Theft, drunkenness and swearing, except the latter, was not common; but then, no one thought religion should occupy too much of their thoughts, and balls and cards were thought innocent for church members.

In this state, with the usual variation of character found in large parishes they continued perfectly united, and strongly opposed to anything like evangelical doctrine. But in the year 1807 it was contemplated to erect a new meeting house, when disputes arose concerning the spot of its location. The parish was divided, one party contending for one spot, and the other for another. Meeting after meeting was held, but no adjustment could be made. Disputes, animosities and determined opposition succeeded, when one party gaining by an inconsiderable majority the victory, the other felt insulted in such a manner that they knew not how to brook it. Retaining their feelings, but concealing their intention they determined to erect themselves into a separate society; and accordingly, when the old meeting-house was sold, as was expected, for a barn or some other unimportant purpose, a committee was secretly instructed to purchase it. This event quickened the feelings which it was hoped some months had allayed; each one declared himself for one party or the other, and opposition, triumph and revenge actuated both.

Two distinct parties now were established, though no variation of feeling or judgment upon any religious subject existed. The offended party held a number of meetings to consult what denomination they should call themselves, when it was decided they should unite themselves with the Baptist society in Medfield. . . . Not one of them was converted, not one was friendly to evangelical truth, not one but despised and hated the sentiments of the Baptists; and yet these men solicited union with a society poor and despised holding these sentiments. . . .

When a union was effected with Medfield, part of the society went regularly to that place upon the Sabbath day; but their new doctrine gave great offense to some. . . . Then could they have repented of their choice had not persecution, by taking their property and lodging their

persons in prison for ministerial taxes, made them determined to submit to anything rather than reunite with those who endeavored to oppress them in the extreme.

In 1811, those who remained members of the Clapboard Trees parish contributed to a fund for the support of preaching. The contributions ranged from ten to one hundred dollars, and the contributors numbered about forty-five persons. The following are their names and the sums contributed, as given in the first report of the trustees of the fund thus created: —

Rev. Thomas Thacher,	$100.00
John Fisher,	100.00
Willard Gay,	100.00
John Baker,	50.00
George Ellis,	50.00
Benjamin Fisher,	77.00
Benjamin Boyden,	35.00
Samuel French,	25.00
Lemuel Thwing,	25.00
Eaton Whiting,	16 66
Jesse Warren,	25.00
John Richards, Jr.,	100.00
Jotham Richards,	25.00
Jotham Richards, for his father,	75.00
Nathaniel Whiting,	33.34
Thaddeus Gay,	16.66
Moses Kingsbury,	16.67
Jeremiah Baker,	100.00
Phinehas Ellis,	85.00
Frederick Richards,	35.00
Eliphalet Rhodes, Jr.,	25.00
Abijah Parker,	16.66
Robert Steel,	25.00
Jason Ellis,	50.00
David Boyd,	16.66
Edward Glover,	16 66
Joel Everett,	32.00
Abel Richards, Jr.,	16.66
Moses Gay,	33.33
Hannah Gay,	11.00
Moses Richards,	16.66
John Richards,	25.00
Sarah Richards,	25.00
Oliver Ellis,	75.00
Lemuel Gay,	50.00

William Gay,	$150.00
Richard Ellis,	25.00
Royal Ellis,	25.00
Willard Ellis,	25.00
Jabez Ellis, for his mother, Rebecca Ellis,	40.00
Benjamin Fairbanks,	75.00
Benjamin Fairbanks, Jr.,	60.00
Daniel Covell,	50.00
Seth Gay, Jr.,	10.00
Lusher Gay,	100.00

The whole amount thus subscribed was $2,084.96. The first trustees of this ministerial fund were the Rev. Thomas Thacher, Willard Gay, George Ellis, and John Baker. The fund was established with the following conditions and regulations :—

DEDHAM, April 18th, 1811.

We, the subscribers, taking into view the importance of supporting the public worship of God in the third Parish in Dedham, the pressure on individuals among us in performing that necessary duty by reason of the secession of a part of our number to the Baptists, the desire we feel to perpetuate a Christian Congregational Church according to the mode in which it has ever existed among us, do solemnly agree and bind ourselves to pay the several sums affixed to our names to the treasurer of the said third Parish in Dedham, for the purpose of supporting the Gospel and its ordinances; the income of which shall be annually devoted to pay the Minister; and the raising of the said fund shall be executed according to the conditions hereafter mentioned, and subject to the regulations here expressed:

First; that the sum subscribed shall be placed at lawful interest, and the interest devoted forever for the annual support of a gospel minister of the Congregational denomination.

Second; that the house of public worship shall continue, and when necessary a new one to be built, on the spot where the present house now stands or within fifty rods thereof.

Thirdly; any subscriber who may desire it shall be entitled to the loan of such sum of money as he may subscribe, by giving his note therefor to the parish treasurer, and paying the interest thereof annually; but if such subscriber or subscribers shall neglect to pay the interest on such note for the space of thirty days after it falls due, they shall thereupon become liable to pay the principle on demand, and it shall be the duty of the trustees hereinafter named forthwith to compel payment of the same.

Fourthly; all monies paid to the treasurer of said parish shall be loaned on land security; and in case the debtor shall neglect to pay the

interest on such loan for the space of thirty days after it falls due, it shall be the duty of the said trustees to compel payment of the principal.

Fifthly; the settled minister, the treasurer and parish committee of said parish shall be a board of trustees for the purpose of managing said fund, and under the regulations and subject to the conditions herein contained shall have the entire control thereof; but in case they shall presume to appropriate either the principal or the annual interest to any other purpose than that herein before mentioned they shall be jointly and severally answerable to the parish therefor out of their own estates and effects.

Sixthly; the said trustees shall at the annual parish meeting lay before the people the state of this fund.

Seventhly; in case the parish shall be destitute of a settled minister for a term not less than one year nor more than six years, the income of this fund shall be reserved by the trustees for the use of the next settled minister, and put out to interest in the same manner as the principal is till a minister shall be settled and then paid over to him in such sums and in such manner annually as the trustees see fit for his annual salary, and not for any other purpose.

Eighthly; in case there shall be no settled minister the treasurer and parish committee shall be the sole trustees of this fund, and the survivors of them in case any of them should die within the year for which they are chosen; and in case the parish should neglect to choose parish officers, and the said offices should be vacant, such of the donors or their heirs as are legal voters within the parish, shall be authorized to appoint trustees to manage said fund in conjunction with the minister, if at such time there shall be a settled minister in the parish, if otherwise such trustees shall have the entire control thereof, subject to the conditions and regulations aforesaid.

Ninthly; in case the parish should apply the said fund or the interest thereof to any other purpose than the one before mentioned, or place the house of worship at a greater distance than fifty rods from where it now stands, or shall be destitute of a settled minister for the space of six years or over, then the whole of the said fund, together with the interest that may have accrued after the parish ceased to have a settled minister shall be forfeited, and the said parish shall be liable to pay to the said donors or their heirs in a right descending line, who may then be inhabitants of said parish, the several sums by them or by their ancestors subscribed; and in case any one of the said subscribers at the time of such forfeiture shall not be living nor have any such heir or heirs in the right descending line living within the parish, then the sum or sums by such donor or donors subscribed, shall be appropriated as a fund for the support of a school within the parish and the interest thereof applied for that purpose forever.

Tenthly; the proprietors, should the majority of them think best, may within two years from this date, viz., April, eighteen hundred and eleven, get incorporated, and alter the management of their property in this fund in its circumstances and forms; but the essentials of it, as comprised in its application and design, shall not be altered.

VIII.

REV. THOMAS THACHER, THE THIRD MINISTER.

THOMAS THACHER was born in Boston, Oct. 24, 1756. His father was Oxenbridge Thacher, a successful and well-known lawyer of that city, who was for many years a member of the General Court, and was so at the time when the Clapboard Trees parish was established. The Thacher family had long been a prominent one in Boston. The great-grandfather of Thomas was the Rev. Thomas Thacher, the first minister of the Old South Church in Boston, whose son, Peter Thacher, was the first minister in Milton. He was also descended from John Oxenbridge, who was a pastor of the first church in Boston.

When Thomas Thacher was nine years old, his father died; and he found a home with his grandfather, "who was a man of public education and usefulness." It is said that in early life "he evinced much more than ordinary force of intellect; but it was combined with an imprudent, reckless spirit, that gave little promise of either respectability or usefulness." At the age of fifteen, however, he entered Harvard College, and was a successful student, graduating in 1775.

After graduation, he spent some time in teaching; and then he began his studies in preparation for the ministry, which he seems to have carried on under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. Cummings, of Billerica. He became the minister of the Clapboard Trees parish at the age of twenty-four, and under conditions favorable to his success. It is said of him, however, in Sprague's *Annals of the Unitarian Pulpit*, that "the indiscretions and follies of his youth had awakened strong prejudices against him, so that his ministry did not begin under the fairest auspices." If he had such a reputation as is thus indicated, it was doubtless owing to his love

of mirth and wit; but he had already made a good impression in other churches before he accepted the invitation to Dedham.

The best account of the person of Mr. Thacher is given by the Rev. Samuel Osgood, who says that he "was a man of a portly and commanding figure, and had a face expressive of much more than common intellectual power. His manners were sufficiently free and cordial, but somewhat blunt, and indicative of what he really possessed,— great independence of character. You could not meet him in the most casual interview without perceiving that he had not the fear of man before his eyes. He had great power of sarcasm; and he indulged it sometimes, perhaps, without the most delicate regard to circumstances. But there was a manifest openness and honesty of purpose that all recognized as a redeeming feature, and as rendering less objectionable that unceremonious bluntness, and even severity, which could hardly fail sometimes to give offence."

The account of him given by his successor is needed to supplement this by Dr. Osgood, which evidently applied only to one side of Mr. Thacher's character. "He possessed," says Mr. White, "intellectual powers far above the ordinary level. He was able to take comprehensive views and could express them in strong and clear language. He could be severe or pathetic, as occasion required. As no one could long be in his presence, so no one could peruse his writings, without being convinced of his mental energy. Possessed of strong moral feeling, he could not look upon vice but with the strongest abhorrence; and when he took the lash he used it with no feeble strokes. He was ardent in his friendship, kind, and ready to sympathize with the distressed. Did he by any harsh or hasty expression wound any one's feelings, he was ever ready to make apology to the injured. He did not think it a mark of a great mind never to confess a fault; nor did he disdain to ask pardon for the wrong he might have done. He sought the things which make for peace."

Mr. Thacher evidently was a man with a vigorous mind,

cast in an original mould, so that he thought and acted for himself. He had too little respect for the conventionalities of society, and often acted from the fresh impulses of a nature that was full of strong purposes. He was possessed of a very active sense of humor, and often spoke and acted without a nice regard to the proprieties of social intercourse. His sympathy was always active, and he was very charitable and generous. A public-spirited citizen he was on all occasions, being greatly interested in all town affairs, and in the politics of the State and nation. He was in every way the leader of his people, and to him they went for advice on subjects of every kind. To a shrewd and capable common sense, he added an acquaintance with affairs and a knowledge of every subject connected with the activities of a country parish. He could settle disputes between his parishioners, tell his neighbors what breed of swine to raise, advise his friends as to the best way in which to cast their votes, talk with the Cambridge men on science and the classics, and discuss with his ministerial brethren, in a manner of uncommon vigor, all the questions of theology. It has been related by a former member of the parish, who has only recently passed away,* that on one occasion a parishioner was asked who was to be voted for at the coming town meeting; and the reply was that "he had not yet asked Parson Thacher."

In every way, Mr. Thacher was a typical country minister of the kind so common in New England in the last century. In a gentle and noble way, he was the autocrat of his parish, ruling it with a rod of love and good-will, with the consent and desire of his people, but ruling it with no uncertain purpose. Then the minister was the educated man of a country parish, and the man in all things the best capable of guiding his fellows. He was a farmer, tilling his own land, often getting a goodly portion of his income by his activities as a man of business; and in many ways he was the most stirring and capable man in the parish. He looked after the interests of the schools; and he did not forget to admonish and advise, and to chastise with his tongue, the younger

*Mr. Jeremiah W. Gay.

portion of his people. Such a man made his influence felt in every part of his parish, and he knew every member of it in the most intimate manner. He was respected and venerated by his people, and by many of them he was loved with generous affection.

As a preacher, Mr. Thacher was marked for good sense, clear thought, and an earnest purpose. He studiously avoided all efforts at arousing the feelings to an undue pitch, and he equally avoided everything like undue enthusiasm and excess in religion. The school of theologians to which he belonged cultivated a calm and deliberate manner of preaching that applied itself to reason far more than to emotion. He appealed to experience, to history, to common sense, and to the practical judgment of his people, in his discourses, and not to dogmas or religious feelings. Everything in the shape of excitement and fervor he rigidly discarded as unworthy of men who would worship God in spirit and in truth.

"As a preacher," says Dr. Samuel Osgood, "he had none of the graces of rhetoric, or other qualities fitted to render him especially popular; but he had a vein of strong sense, which gave him considerable favor with persons of reflection and intelligence." There was probably little of unction and magnetism in his preaching, and little that aroused and moved a congregation; but there was wholesome teaching, that left its deep results on thought and life, and that helped to mould the purpose and the conduct of the thoughtful. His sermons were carefully planned, thoroughly wrought out, written in a good and clear style, and had a distinct end and purpose in view.

It may truly be said of Mr. Thacher that he was given to hospitality; and it is the social side of his character which is the most fully remembered in the parish. It was his usual custom to invite several of his parishioners to his house to dine after the morning service, saying to them that they must expect "pot luck." On Sunday evenings, his people were wont to gather at his house, and there to discuss the affairs of the parish, or whatever else was upper-

most in their minds. "Hospitality," said one of his ministerial friends, "was a prominent trait in his character. This is a tribute which all who were conversant with him will cheerfully pay. It was a virtue in which he excelled." The same friend says that "he possessed a high and delicate sense of honor, and was susceptible of the tenderest sympathy. To the distressed and needy, he was ever ready to extend a benevolent arm, and to open the charitable hand. In a remarkable degree, he was kind to the poor."

It is evident that Mr. Thacher was generous, sympathetic, hospitable, sociable, and a lover of wit and fun. His jokes, witticisms, odd speeches, and droll actions have been more fully remembered in the parish than anything else about him. In the sermon preached at his funeral, already quoted, this was said: "There was sometimes a want of uniformity and evenness in his deportment, and his passions evidently partook of the strength of his mind. His sensibility was quick and keen. Like the musical instrument, it obeyed the touch; and, in the warmth of the moment, he was apt to be warm in his expressions. By a sudden impulse of feeling, and from a native frankness and openness of mind, he was sometimes betrayed into extremes, when it is presumed no moral evil was intended, when his heart meant not to be wrong. Under such strong excitements, he was tempted to unguarded licenses, which, in cooler moments, he pretended not to justify." This strong temper, joined with his drollery and dislike of conventionality, made Mr. Thacher a man of a marked character, and one long to be remembered.

For many of his parishioners he had a nickname, indicative of character. Another oddity of his was to call his pitchers by the names of lady members of his congregation. He even carried his love of joking into the pulpit; for, when he was observed smiling frequently one afternoon during the delivery of the sermon, he was asked the occasion, and replied, "Why, I was preaching the very same sermon, word for word, this afternoon, that I preached in the morning; and I was laughing to see how gravely you took it, —

just as if you had never heard it before." The sharpness of his wit was sometimes cutting, as when he said of a woman in the parish, "If the Lord should send for the greatest slut on earth, I should tremble for my neighbor's wife." Even more stinging was his remark, that the Baptist society was as necessary to his own as a sink to a house. On one occasion, when about going away to preach a sermon, he said to a workman, "I must go and preach the *word:* you will find the *spirit* in the closet." When he first came to preach in the parish, he said to the family of Capt. Jeremiah Baker, by whom he was entertained, the first morning after breakfast, "Well, I suppose I must play a tune on that old fiddle of yours." Then he took up the Bible, read a chapter, and offered prayer. His wit seems sometimes to have aroused the wit of his neighbors, and on one occasion a parishioner quite got the better of him in a wit combat. He named one of his swine after a parishioner he did not hold in high esteem. The parishioner retorted by sketching a pig-pen, with Mr. Thacher standing by it, and uttering this couplet: —

> "My office, though sacred and divine,
> I now have left to christen swine."

There can be no doubt he would have thoroughly enjoyed the spirit of one event, which, says tradition, happened during his ministry in the parish. One of his young men wished to marry a young woman who lived in Walpole, and he was very anxious to have Mr. Thacher perform the marriage service. The tradition says that the law did not permit a minister to go out of his own town to officiate on such occasions, and that the service must be performed in the town where the bride lived. To get over these difficulties, the parties concerned proceeded to Bubbling Brook, where the happy couple stood on the Walpole side, and Mr. Thacher on the Dedham side, and the marriage took place.

It is also related of him that he on one occasion exchanged with Mr. Buckminster, of the Brattle Street Church, Boston. A number of young men were in the habit of attending that

church, who did not care to hear any one but the pastor, and were accustomed to leave the church if any other minister appeared in the pulpit. This occurred on the day when Mr. Thacher preached, and he happened to notice it. At his nephew's, during the intermission, he mentioned what had taken place, and said, "I have, at least, shown myself possessed of one apostolic gift to-day,— that of casting out devils." This story is told in a somewhat different form, in which this remark is said to have been made in the First Parish Church, Dedham. During the fierce political discussions of the early years of the Republic, he preached a sermon there that was extremely partisan in its character, as he was strongly devoted to the principles of the Federalist party, and not at all disinclined to give strong expression to his opinions. A number of persons arose and went out of church. Mr. Thacher stopped, and said, "I see that I have, at least, one apostolic gift,— the power to cast out devils." It is possible that both of these incidents are true, and either is true enough to have been highly characteristic. Thomas Thacher was a man of wider reading and greater intellectual power than his brother Peter, who preached in Boston, although the latter was the more polished and eloquent of the two. Being a popular preacher, many of Peter's sermons were printed; and he was in the habit of sending them to his brother. On one occasion, when Peter was on a visit to Thomas, he took up, in his brother's study, a volume labelled *Trash.* "What is this book called *Trash?*" asked Peter. "Look and see for yourself," was the reply. After glancing through it, Peter exclaimed, "Why, you dog, it is my sermons!"

He was sometimes in the habit of preparing his own meals, with the aid of his students. One morning, after the steak had been well put on the coals, he said to the boys, "You watch, and I'll pray." When quite a young man, he was one day at the house of a relative in Milton, when a lady asked him what profession he intended to choose. When he replied that he was to be a minister, she expressed some doubt of his fitness for that calling. He

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said to her, "Madam, I shall some day preach in Milton; and I will make you weep." It is said that this really happened a few years later. A tradition of the parish says that Mr. Thacher was engaged in marriage to a young lady, who finally discarded him for some other lover; and this is said to have been the reason why he did not marry, for his disappointment made him resolve he would not expose himself to another failure. He was engaged to be married; for the town records contain this entry under the head of "Intentions of Marriage": "Rev. Thomas Thacher and Miss Catherine Fuller, both of Dedham, Nov. 20, 1783." They also reveal the fact that she was the daughter of Hezekiah and Anne Fuller, and that she was born July 12, 1764. A little farther on is this entry, also under the head of "Intentions of Marriage," which seems to explain why Mr. Thacher did not marry: "The Rev. Ebenezer Wight of Boston and Miss Catherine Fuller of Dedham, October 22, 1785." Miss Catherine was young in 1783, and the oddities of her reverend lover may have frightened her. It is said, by way of tradition in the parish, that she visited Mr. Thacher's house just before the marriage was to have taken place, that she carelessly soiled her dress on some fresh paint, and that he became very angry with her, so much so that she discarded him.

These anecdotes, with others of a similar character, have been repeated in the parish until they have become familiar to every one. All who knew him delighted to repeat them, and to describe his manner of life at his own home and in the parish. Even now, he is familiarly spoken of as "Parson Thacher"; and his influence is yet strongly felt throughout the parish.

It would not be just to Mr. Thacher, however, to judge him by such anecdotes as these; for they do not represent him at his best. The most they do is to give us a hint of his every-day character, as he often appeared to his parishioners during the week. He seems never to have had that strained dignity and that forced seriousness which some ministers cultivated in the olden times, and he did not pretend to a solemnity which was not natural to him.

Mr. Thacher was a fine classical scholar, and well trained in the knowledge of his day. He was familiar with the Greek and Latin classics, and often drew his illustrations from the best ancient authors and from the history of Greece and Rome. In his day, the classical authors were as familiar as the Bible to educated men; and his sermons testify that he had read them with interest and zeal. A quotation from Shakspere and one from Montesquieu, as well as from other modern poets and essayists, indicate that he read outside the subjects of the mere student. He was well read in history, and he was familiar with the political science of his day. His scholarship was such that he was made a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. It is also said that "his writings and his conversation were much valued by learned men." In the year 1805 he delivered the Dudleian lecture in Cambridge, and in 1807 he gave the address at the dedication of the Milton Academy. These are indications that he was respected for his scholarship on the part of his friends. During the greater part of his residence in the parish, he was in the habit of taking boys into his house, who were prepared by him for entering Harvard College. In this work of teaching, he was successful, being "an able and useful instructor." He also prepared young men for the ministry, and with unusual success. Among the men he trained in theology was Joseph Tuckerman, whose ordination sermon he preached at Chelsea in 1801, and who became widely known as the founder of the ministry at large in Boston.

No subject interested Mr. Thacher more than the welfare of his country. In 1788, he was chosen a member of the State convention, which was called for the purpose of ratifying the national Constitution. His colleague from Dedham was Fisher Ames, a young man of his own age, who first gained his reputation at this time. Mr. Ames spoke on biennial elections, and Mr. Thacher also addressed the convention in a speech in favor of adopting the Federal Constitution. In his Thanksgiving sermon of 1795, his Fast Day sermons of 1808 and 1812, his eulogy of Washington

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in 1800, his sermon on the death of Samuel Adams in 1803, and his general election sermon of 1811, given before the governor, his council, and the two houses of the legislature, his patriotism and his anxious desire for the welfare of the Republic are fully made manifest. He thoroughly believed in American ideas and institutions, and he deprecated the great political discords then so common and so threatening.

The following is a list of the sermons, lectures, and addresses delivered by Mr. Thacher, and afterwards published, as contained in an appendix to the funeral sermon by the Rev. Stephen Palmer. It is believed that everything he published is here enumerated.

1.— A Sermon upon Coloss. 3, 12, February 23, 1784.

2.— Speech in Convention, in favour of adopting the Federal Constitution, A. D. 1788.

3.— A Thanksgiving Sermon, February 19, 1795.

4.— A Sermon on the death of the Rev. Nathaniel Robbins of Milton, May 24, 1795.

5.— A Sermon delivered in the Episcopal Church, in Dedham, on the festival of Christmas, December 25, 1797.

6.— A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. Elijah Dunbar, at Peterborough, (N. H.) October 23, 1799.

7.— A Sermon upon Ephesians ii. 8, delivered at Peterborough, the Lord's day after Mr. Dunbar's Ordination, October 27, 1799.

8.— Eulogy on Gen. Washington, delivered in Dedham, February 22, 1800.

9.— A Discourse before the Humane Society, June 18, 1800.

10.— A Sermon upon Psalm lxxviii. 4, giving an historical sketch of the third Parish in Dedham, January 11, 1801.

11.— A Sermon upon the danger of despising the divine counsel, delivered at Dedham, third Parish, the Lord's day after the execution of Jason Fairbanks, September 13, 1801.

12.— A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, at Chelsea, November 4, 1801.

13.— A Sermon on the death of Governor Adams, delivered at Dedham, third Parish, the next Lord's day after his interment, October, 1803.

14.— A Sermon at the Dudleian Lecture, May 8, 1805.

15.— A Discourse at the dedication of Milton Academy, September 9, 1807.

16.— A Sermon on the Public Fast, April 14, 1808.

17.— A Biographical Memoir of the Rev. Samuel West, D. D., 1808.

18.— A Sermon on taking leave of the old meeting-house in the third Parish in Dedham, February 26, 1809.

19.— A Sermon at the Dedication of the new meeting-house in the third Parish in Dedham, March 1, 1809.

20.— A Sermon at the General Election, May 29, 1811.

21.— A Sermon at the Funeral of the Rev. Jabez Chickering, March 16, 1812.

22.— A Sermon on the Public Fast, April 9, 1812.

In theology, Mr. Thacher belonged to that liberal school of preachers which was represented in Boston by the younger Buckminster, William Emerson, and S. C. Thacher. These men had modified and humanized the Calvinism of the Puritans, omitted its rigid doctrine of election, quieted the fires of its hell, and made Jesus subordinate to the Father. They regarded Christianity as a divine and authenticated revelation, they took the Bible as their creed, and they made the gospel of Jesus the way of salvation here and hereafter. Their preaching was gentle and moral, and they left all men to search the Bible for themselves. "In his theological sentiments," it was said of Mr. Thacher, "he called no man master. No one was ever more pointedly opposed to uninspired creeds and formularies than he. He took the Bible exclusively for his guide, and examined and thought for himself." This was precisely the attitude of the early Unitarians, and to this party he was affiliated by all his thoughts and tendencies. It will have been seen that he did not in any degree sympathize with infidelity or with any loosening of the old bonds of religion. He believed in the Church, in the Bible, and in Christianity with all the vigor of his earnest nature. His desire was to make religion simple and pure, and to give it the real gospel spirit. He did have, however, a strong dislike of Calvinism. In his memoir of the Rev. Samuel West, who was for many years the minister in Needham, and subsequently settled over the Hollis Street Church in Boston, he spoke of Calvinism as "a gloomy, contracted system of divinity." In the ordination sermon of the Rev. Joseph Tuckerman in Chelsea, he said of the Puritans, "We lament that they

carried intolerance to a very blameable extent, that they were tinctured with bigotry, and that they were too fond of the dogmas of Calvin." In his will, he also gave expression in very strong terms to his dislike and his distrust of all who teach religion in a gloomy and bigoted spirit.

Where Mr. Thacher first lived when he came to the parish is not known, but possibly it may have been in the house which the parish gave to Mr. Tyler. After he had been settled four years, in the spring of 1784 he purchased of Joseph Onion the house now owned by the Rev. Calvin S. Locke, and situated about twenty rods directly east of the meeting-house. On the 14th of April in that year, the parish voted to give him the liberty of cutting timber on the parish lands for sills for his house, which would indicate that the house was enlarged by him when he took possession of it. In connection with the house, Mr. Thacher purchased a small farm; and his varied duties included those of a farmer as well as those of a teacher and a minister.

On the 19th of October, 1812, Mr. Thacher died. He was only fifty-six years of age, and he had always been in vigorous health until within a few months of his death. During the summer of that year, he was not able to preach; and his pulpit was supplied by his friends, the ministers of the neighboring churches.

The loss of two of his intimate friends, as well as a fatal accident happening to one of his pupils, are said to have helped on that depression of spirit which joined with disease to take him away at so early an age. His funeral discourse was preached by his friend, the Rev. Stephen Palmer, of Needham, who paid a worthy tribute to his memory. "He was a burning and a shining light," said his eulogist; "and you were willing to rejoice in his light for a season, and ought still to rejoice that it shone so long. To you, he was an affectionate minister. He took a lively interest in your feelings, and was devoted to your prosperity and welfare. It was the unfeigned desire of his heart to build you up in temporal as well as in spiritual things. You have been much honored, and, I will hope, equally profited, by his

labors. It now remains that you profit by his death. He expressed an anxious concern for your peace and religious welfare, when he should be gone."

By his will, Mr. Thacher left the larger part of his property to the parish with which he had been connected for more than thirty-two years. His gift included his farm of twenty acres and about three hundred and fifty dollars of personal property, in all amounting to three thousand dollars. He had already contributed liberally towards the building of the meeting-house, to the establishment of a ministerial fund, and to other objects calculated to promote the welfare of the parish. He had a strong affection for his people, and he had no stronger desire than to secure their prosperity. The conditions on which he left his property to the parish indicate how keenly he had felt the secession of a part of his parishioners, and how warmly he was opposed to the more rigid forms of religion taught in the New England churches. There follows, word for word, the text of his will, in full: —

In the name of the Eternal God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first born of every creature, and the Savior of mankind; Amen.

I, Thomas Thacher, of Dedham, in the county of Norfolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, clerk, being through divine goodness of sound mind and health, and considering the uncertainty of life, do constitute and ordain this to be my last will and testament.

Imprimis. I commend my spirit unto the hands of God who gave it, not doubting but that I shall be judged by a being of infinite wisdom and boundless benevolence, who will require no more of me than what he doth enable me to perform, and will measure his final judgment, not by the faith of gloomy and perverse bigots (who sacrilegiously assume the prerogatives of heaven, and with an equal degree of folly and presumption, decide on the future fates of mankind,) but by the everlasting principles of truth and goodness, by the rank which I have held in his creation and by the relation which I bear to him and his offspring.

My body I commend to the dust in sure and certain hope of the resurrection and a future life. And as the desire of preserving some frail memorial of our name and actions is common to humanity, it is my will and request, that a plain monument be erected over my grave, with a Latin inscription which I shall enclose in this instrument. Furthermore, it is my will that, after my just debts and funeral charges shall

have been defrayed, the remaining property shall be disposed of in the following manner:

Item. I give and bequeath to my nephew, P. O. Thacher, Esq., of Boston in the county of Suffolk, the sum of one thousand dollars. I also give and commit to his care all my manuscripts which I shall leave at my decease; and it is my request that he burn or destroy all such as are unfinished or imperfect. I also will and direct that if my nephew, P. O. Thacher, wishes for any part of my library or household furniture as a part of the legacy aforesaid, that he have liberty to take it at a fair appraisement.

Item. I give and bequeath to my friend, Nathan P. West, of Boston, the sum of fifty dollars, to be laid out in silver plate in such way and manner as he may direct; and to his brother, Benjamin West, of Boston, I give and bequeath a gold ring and breast-pin bequeathed to me by the Hon. S. Dexter, Esq.

Item. I give and bequeath to the third parish in Dedham, usually called Clapboard trees, all my real estate which shall remain after the payment of my just debts and the legacies mentioned in this instrument, provided they comply with the following conditions; first, that they pay in trust to P. O. Thacher, Esq., of Boston, the sum of thirty dollars annually during the space of ten years towards the support of my sister Judith Thacher, provided she so long survive after my decease. Should the said P. O. Thacher die before the said term of ten years expires, it may be paid to his executors or any person whom he may assign for the above mentioned purpose. Second, that all such real estate as they shall recieve of me shall forever be kept for the use of a parsonage and shall never be alienated or sold, it being my intention that it should remain forever for the support and maintenance of a Congregational minister. Also, that the net proceeds of any personal estate which they may recieve from me shall be added and appropriated to the parish ministerial fund, so-called, in said third parish in Dedham. Third, that within five years of my decease they settle a minister educated at Harvard College in Cambridge, and one who is not of high Calvinistic or Hopkinsian sentiments, and who has recieved no part of his education at the theological institution in Andover in Massachusetts; also, that it be a condition of his settlement and continuance among them that he shall never preach or promote such sentiments.

Item. I give and bequeath to Lieut. W. B. Shubrick the sum of twenty dollars, in testimony of my respect for him and his family, to be appropriated as he shall think proper.

Item. I give and bequeath to my respected friend, Levi Hedge, professor at Harvard College, the sum of twenty dollars in consideration of many civilities and important acts of friendship.

Item. As to the rest and residue of my estate, both real and personal, if there shall any remain after payment of debts, legacies and

bequests aforesaid, I give and bequeath it to the third parish aforesaid in Dedham, to be used and appropriated according to the conditions in the above bequest to said parish. And I do hereby constitute and appoint my nephew, P. O. Thacher, Esq., of Boston, to be the sole executor of this my last will and testament.

Codicil. In addition to the above will and testament I, the subscriber, do subjoin the following codicil:

Whereas, in that instrument I have given to the third parish in Dedham all my real and personal estate, after the payment of my just debts and legacies, to which are affixed certain conditions, for the non-performance of which no penalty or forfeiture is mentioned, I further will and ordain that in case the conditions aforesaid are not complied with, that all my estate revert and be given to my nephew, P. O. Thacher, Esq., of Boston, and his heirs forever.

I furthermore constitute and appoint the members of the Supreme judiciary of Massachusetts to be the judges of the conditions mentioned in the above instrument.

Item. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Stephen Palmer, of Needham, the sum of ten dollars to purchase a mourning ring.

Item. I give and bequeath to Mr. Benjamin West, of Boston, in addition to the legacy mentioned in the above instrument, all the gold and silver apparel which I shall have at my decease.

The condition of Mr. Thacher's will, that the minister should never preach or promote high Calvinistic or Hopkinsian beliefs, was a source of much perplexity to the parish. At a meeting held April 13, 1813, a committee of two was appointed to secure the opinions of two eminent counselors on the validity of this condition. Doubts having been expressed as to whether this condition could or ought to be carried into effect, this action was taken. The subject was again brought up in May; and it was then dismissed, probably because the condition was found to be obligatory.

After the death of Mr. Thacher, the Rev. William Montague preached for a time in supply of the pulpit. In February, 1813, the church invited Isaac Hurd to become its pastor; and in March the parish unanimously concurred. It would seem that Mr. Hurd was a young man, and his place of residence was Charlestown. The people evidently thought well of him, and were anxious to have him for a minister; but he did not like the theological restrictions placed on the pulpit by the conditions of Mr. Thacher's bequest. In his

letter declining the call to become the minister of the parish, he said : —

> The unanimity you have discovered, the expressions of esteem which I have received during my visits among you, with other agreeable circumstances, have served to create an attachment and to excite a lively interest in your welfare ; and it is not without painful feelings and the sacrifice of many pleasant anticipations that I am obliged from principles of duty to return a negative answer to your call. I have, however, found it impossible, in the event of accepting your invitation, to remove all those doubts, and to possess that satisfaction of mind, which the consciousness of having formed a proper determination would produce, and which would be necessary to a faithful and cheerful discharge of the duties of my office. One reason which has influenced this decision I have made, as it is perhaps the most powerful, it may be necessary to state ; and that arises from the conditions on which your late reverend pastor, Mr. Thacher, has made his bequest to the parish. The terms on which his donation must be received as a part of the salary of his succesor are such that I cannot consistently with the dictates of my conscience accede to them. They impose that restraint upon my future opinions to which a regard for truth and the importance of free inquiry forbid me to submit.

It is evident that at the time when he wrote this letter Mr. Hurd could comply with the conditions required of the minister who should settle with the parish ; but he was unwilling to pledge himself for the future, or to settle where such a limitation was placed on his utterance of what he believed to be truth. Before calling another minister, the parish secured a statement of these conditions from a legal authority, which was to be inserted in the call, so that the parish might secure his dismissal at any time if he violated the conditions of the will.

IX.

REV. JOHN WHITE, THE FOURTH MINISTER.

In February, 1814, one year and a half after the death of Mr. Thacher, a call was extended to John White, of Concord, to become the minister. He was offered six hundred dollars and ten cords of wood for his salary. The call was given on condition of his complying with the requirements of Mr. Thacher's will. In his letter of acceptance, Mr. White wrote: —

> As to the sentiments on religious subjects that I have expressed in public and in private, they are what I now concieve to be agreeable to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are the rule of faith and practice, and according to which I expect to be judged at the last day. Still, I would have it understood, that no pledge is given on my part to maintain any system of doctrine, farther than it shall appear at any time to be supported by the oracles of God. And if, in the course of my inquiries after truth, a change take place in my opinions concerning the import of sacred writings, I shall feel myself at liberty to communicate them without reserve.

Mr. White was no more willing than was Mr. Hurd to foreclose his mind to truth. In fact, by this time such a spirit had grown up in the Congregational churches of New England as precluded any arbitrary limitations in regard to free inquiry. Especially among the more liberal party, to which Mr. White belonged, there was entire unwillingness to subscribe to any doctrinal restrictions of any kind whatever. While they revolted against the doctrines of Calvin, they did not seek for any other doctrinal statement of faith. This attitude of the time, and of Mr. White as one of the liberal party, must be taken into account, in order to understand why the parish became distinctly Unitarian under his ministry.

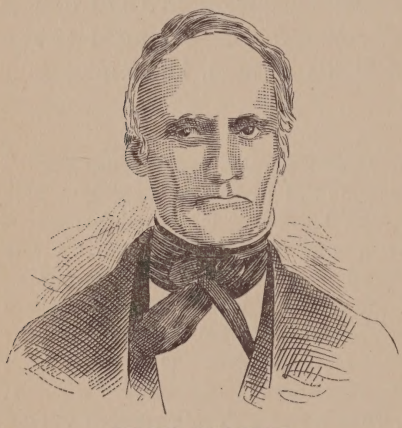
The memory of Mr. White is yet so fragrant in the parish it is almost impossible for any one to do full justice to the love and veneration that was and is felt for him. No statement of one who did not know him can fill out the picture of him, which is in the minds of all who knew him in the flesh, and in the beautiful spirit of his daily life. He was ordained April 20, 1814, the sermon being preached by his own pastor, the Rev. Ezra Ripley, of Concord. The charge was given by the Rev. George Morey, of Walpole, and the right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Joshua Bates, of the first parish in Dedham. That Mr. Bates took part in this service was an indication that the separation in the Congregational churches had not yet come, for he belonged to the stricter party. Near the end of his sermon, Dr. Ripley said to his young friend: —

> That mixture of diffidence and fortitude, faith and exertion, which has marked your approach to the solemnities of this day, exhibits your character in a very favorable point of light, and is a fair presage of future reputation and success. It is with no ordinary joy that I welcome to the stated ministry one so well disposed and qualified — one so dear to my heart and so worthy of my esteem. From the day when you were publicly dedicated to God, we observed with hope and delight your growth in stature and in favor with God and man. Our hearts were gladdened by the discovery of early dispositions to the ways of wisdom; and our joy was full at seeing you, while a youth, devote yourself to God and enlist under the banner of the cross in the bosom of the church of Christ. Our expectations have not been disappointed; our hopes are now realized by your taking part with us in the ministry of reconciliation, the power of which, we trust, you have felt upon your own heart. With delightful sensibility we participate in the joy which events of this day must give to your particular friends, and especially to your pious and affectionate father, who witnesses the best fruits of his tender cares for you, and joyous answers to his fervent prayers in your behalf.

At the parish meeting, when Mr. White was voted upon, thirty favored him, and ten were opposed. In his letter of acceptance, he said that he understood the opposition was not with reference to himself, but those who objected wished for more explicit terms of settlement. The committee of arrangements for his ordination consisted of Benjamin

Fisher, Capt. Jeremiah Baker, Moses Richards, Capt. Benjamin Fairbanks, Samuel Thwing, Jesse Warren, and Capt. Daniel Covell. Colburn Ellis was paid $5.63 for thirteen half-pints of spirit and crackers and cheese for the singers on this occasion, according to the treasurer's accounts. It cost the parish one hundred dollars for entertaining the council.

Mr. White was born in Concord, Mass., Dec. 22, 1787. His father was John White, a beloved and venerated citizen of that place, and for many years a deacon of the church there. In early youth, Mr. White manifested the spirit of piety, and he was always pure and upright in his conduct. His minister there was the Rev. Ezra Ripley, who was the pastor in that church for more than sixty years, and a man of an original and striking cast of mind. He was much such a man as Mr. Thacher, with whom he was contemporary at Harvard; and all his excellences, faults, and wit have been written of in a tender manner by Emerson and Mr. F. B. Sanborn. Dr. Ripley often preached in the Clapboard Trees parish after Mr. White settled in it, and he is yet well remembered by at least one person at whose father's house he often visited.*



THE REV. JOHN WHITE.

Mr. White's preparatory studies were carried on at the seminary in Exeter, and he entered Harvard College at the age of thirteen. He graduated in 1805, and with a good reputation as a student. He was then a tutor in Bowdoin College for a short period. His theological studies were begun under the instruction of the Rev. Joseph Chickering, of Woburn, and were concluded under Dr. Ware in Cambridge. At this period, he held some connection with the college, probably as a tutor. "There I first saw him," says

* Mrs. Merrill D. Ellis.

Dr. Lamson, "and I remembered well the same look,— grave, sincere, respectful, and full of self-respect,— which he never ceased to wear; and I know how greatly he was esteemed by acquaintances and friends."

All who knew Mr. White will say that he was a true minister. He was not a great preacher, had no ambition in that direction, did not covet distinction; but he was thoroughly devoted to his work, and zealous in his love for his people. He was gentle, devout, sympathetic, and full of kindly feeling. Everybody loved him, and he had the good will of all within and without his own congregation. He was of a mild and forbearing spirit, even in temper, gracious in manner, and ready always to speak the word of peace.

During his long settlement of thirty-eight years, the parish was in a condition of entire harmony. His nature was of that mould that he was ever the same on all occasions, had no ups and downs, uttered no rash words, and did nothing which could in any way promote discord. This had its effect on the parish, and helped to promote the good feeling which continued throughout his long ministry. Dr. Lamson paid a worthy tribute to his success in this direction: "A more peaceful ministry never existed. Through these long years, not a murmur of discontent has ever arisen; no acrimony of feeling has ever been awakened; there has been no angry controversy; no bitterness nor strife; no feverish restlessness; no ill-feeling; no reproach nor recrimination. All has been light; no dark cloud has risen in your sky." This was said by Dr. Lamson in his funeral sermon; and he also said to the congregation then assembled: "You all trusted him; you knew that he was your friend, that he was a kind interpreter of motives and actions, that he was not one who was disposed easily to contract prejudices, or to have his mind darkened by suspicion and distrust. So he proceeded on his calm, even way, provoking no hostility; for it was not easy to feel enmity towards such a man,— in his going out and coming in, so prudent, always considerate of others' feelings, so just, so self-possessed, so reasonable."

Tribute has been paid to the memory of Mr. White by Dr.

Lamson, in his admirable funeral discourse, by the Rev. C. C. Sewall, and by Mr. Locke. All that now can be said of his character and the admirable nature of his ministry has been said by these persons. Whoever follows them must repeat in substance what they have said, and said in a manner very excellent and just. They all bear tribute to his unworldly and simple character, to his fidelity and uprightness, and to his desire to serve his fellow-men.

During the ministry of Mr. White, the parish became Unitarian; but it became so without any special agitation, and probably without controversy or bitterness of any kind. His preaching was practical, and not theological; and it was calculated to teach men how to live rather than how to settle disputed points in religion. People of all shades of belief heard his preaching, and all alike were edified by it. He drove no one away by what he said, because he said nothing at which any one could take offence. He was devout, trusting, possessed of the true spirit of a living faith; and he made religion real and helpful to those who heard him. His aim was to develop a pure and holy living, in the gospel manner and purpose. He was not an aggressive Unitarian, sought no controversies with those of other religious professions, and had no desire to promote the interests of a sect. His Unitarianism was that of the first generation of its professed advocates in this country, who wished to return to the pure and simple teachings of Jesus, and who wished to get rid of all theology that was in opposition to the ten commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, a pure trust in God and a future life, and who found in Jesus a Master to whom they gave the truest reverence. They took the Bible as their creed, and they gave it a generous and a loving interpretation.

During Mr. White's ministry, four of his sermons were printed. The first of these was given before the Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, an auxiliary branch of which was organized in Dedham. This sermon was delivered in 1817, and was a plea for the temperance movement which had just begun. He was one of the vice-presidents

of the society to which he spoke, and he was fully in sympathy with its objects. His sermon was, in fact, an exposition of the objects of the society and a defence of its reasons for being.

His next printed sermon was preached in 1822, at the funeral of the Rev. Stephen Palmer, of Needham, who preached the funeral discourse at the death of Mr. Thacher. Mr. Palmer was of the more orthodox of the Congregationalists, the separation between the two branches of that body not then having been made complete. In his sermon, Mr. White alluded to the Orthodoxy of his friend, and also to his liberality and toleration as well as to his charity of mind. "We have in this union," he said, "an example which, if followed, would present to our view the Christian world, like a band of brethren, not contending merely for the prevalence of one system of speculative belief over another, but striving together in the exercise of kind affection to promote practical godliness."

In 1828, Mr. White preached a sermon on "The Nature and Extent of Christian Liberty." This was probably as clear and full an expression of his attitude towards the doctrines of religion as he ever gave. It was an excellent statement of the liberal idea of the worth and need of liberty in religion. He maintained that there should be liberty in regard to the use of the external rites of religion; that every individual should have the right of the free exercise of liberty in the interpretation of the Bible, no one possessing a claim to the privilege of dominion over his faith; that there should be freedom from the dominion of sin; and that Christian liberty implies freedom from the condemning power of sin. He claimed that the doctrines most contended for are those enveloped in mystery and darkness, and those which are inferred rather than clearly stated. He held firmly to the Bible as the source of Christian teaching, but he would have men perfectly free to interpret it for themselves.

In 1836, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the distinct existence of the parish, Mr. White pre-

pared an historical sermon, which was soon after published. On account of a storm, it was not delivered on the 10th of January, but a week later. It was the first account of the history of the parish, of any fulness or thoroughness, which had ever been prepared. It indicates much research and careful preparation, a use of the church and parish records and of such traditions as could be relied on. It includes, with the numerous notes which were appended, an admirable account of the parish and those who had lived in it. His estimate of the ministers who had preceded him in the parish was fair and just, and expressed in his usual charitable spirit. In every way, it showed his attachment to the parish, and his love of that which was best in its life. Speaking of the houses of the first settlers, several of which still remained in his day, he said: "We look with a sort of veneration upon these ancient abodes of the men and women of a generation long since passed away. They remind us of the firmness and vigor and determined spirit which were characteristic of their occupants. They have stood through the storms and sunshine of more than a hundred annual revolutions. The present strength of their frames makes us almost ready to believe that they may endure through another century. Their sturdy oaken beams seem to defy the tooth of time, compared with which our modern structures are like the vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." It was to be expected that Mr. White would love the sturdy and honest work of the first settlers, and have a feeling of firm respect for what they did and were.

The peace and quietude of the parish at this period, its very prosperity and success, give less than ever before for the historian to record. The better its work is done, the less is there in the life of a religious society which can attract any special interest. Men and women were being made stronger for human duty and more worthy to serve God, but these things cannot be put upon record or brought forth to adorn the historian's page. The quiet simplicity of Mr. White's life left its lasting impression on his people;

but it went evenly on from day to day, without jar or discord. He was a true pastor and a faithful shepherd of his flock.

He followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, and was in the habit of taking to his house a number of boys for private instruction in preparation for college. This work he carried on successfully, and it added to his moderate income by a method which was congenial to his nature. His house was the centre of the social activity of the parish. Two daughters were born to him, Elizabeth Jane and Delia Dwight. Soon after his settlement, he built a commodious house a few rods west of the meeting-house, now owned by Mr. Franklin Copeland; and there he resided until his death.

During his ministry, he was greatly aided by his wife, to whom he was married Jan. 1, 1817. She was Delia Jane Holcomb Dwight, the daughter of Seth Dwight, of Utica, N.Y.; but she had lived for many years with the Rev. Mr. Holcomb, of Sterling, whose wife was her aunt. She was eminently fitted to be the wife of a minister, for she was energetic, devoted, and self-possessed. She was very active in promoting the interests of the parish, and did not hesitate to take the lead when any hard work was to be done. She readily became, says Mr. Sewall, "a fit helpmate to her husband in all his pastoral and his domestic affairs. Whatever might affect any of the people, whether of joy or sorrow, was of interest to her, and whenever sickness, suffering, or bereavement became their experience, her sympathetic, helpful, and comforting presence was quickly afforded to them. But it was in her own home, in all her domestic arrangements, and in the constant demands on her there, that the disposition and ability of Mrs. White were most actively and fully developed." Her memory is still a constant influence in the parish, and her name is associated with many a benefit now enjoyed by it.

Mrs. White, after the death of her first husband, married Benjamin D. Emerson, the author of a widely used arithmetic, and lived in Jamaica Plain, where she resided until her death in 1864. One who knew her there says she was a

leader in every good work, and a woman of such presence and influence as is rarely to be found. She was very active during the period of the Civil War, in promoting the interests of the Sanitary Commission and in otherwise lending cheer and aid to the soldiers.

After a long and prosperous ministry of thirty-eight years, Mr. White passed away on Sunday, Feb. 1, 1852. His illness was very brief, for he was in the pulpit only two or three weeks before. Three days later, the Rev. Dr. Lamson preached a funeral discourse, full of tender recollections, to a very large congregation in the meeting-house. It was a noble tribute to the memory of his friend. "His great sermon was his life," said the preacher; "and few, if any, ever preached a better." This was a true summing up of the career of Mr. White. Nothing more or better could be said about him, because this was the highest praise. "We have had," says Mr. Sewall, "like knowledge of no one among his contemporaries in the ministry, whose record was more entirely free from any stain of worldly ambition or of unfaithfulness to the highest ends and obligations of the pastoral relation. His uniform singleness of purpose and earnestness of endeavor to make full proof of his ministry in the spiritual health and prosperity of his flock were happily productive of that inward peace which outlasts all human favor, and is infinitely better than all human applause. His transparent simplicity and sincerity, the calm dignity of his bearing, and the warmth of his affections made him a favorite with all his associates in the ministry and among his many friends in all the relations of life."

On the Saturday following Mr. White's death, the *Christian Register* paid this tribute to his memory: "Mr. White was esteemed and beloved by all who knew him as a true and faithful Christian minister. In all the relations of life, he was a man of duty and a man of gentle affections. Many have enjoyed his hospitality, and some have found his house, in early days, when under his care as a teacher, a second home, where they hardly felt the want of parental care and tenderness. Few men have been more unostentatiously

useful, and few have left behind them a memory so stainless and of so much substantial worth. Within the circle in which he moved, his loss will be deeply felt. . . . He was a man of meekness and humility, firm in his convictions, steadfast in his purposes and affections, bearing himself always with a dignity and grace which mark the character of the true Christian gentleman."

X.

THE BAPTIST SOCIETY.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the ideas and principles of the Baptist denomination were accepted by a few persons in Medfield. In 1752, seven men were exempted from paying the ministerial tax, because they formed a branch of the Baptist society in Boston. Their numbers increased, and in 1772 they were able to build a meeting-house. The church was formed in 1776, with twenty-eight members; and the Rev. Thomas Gair was settled as the pastor, remaining with the society until 1787. A period of twenty-three years followed, in which the society had no pastor, the pulpit being supplied. In 1810, the Rev. William Gammell became the settled pastor; and he preached on alternate Sundays in Medfield and West Dedham.

Of those who seceded from the Clapboard Trees parish, only one man, Benjamin Colburn, joined the church in Medfield; and he became a member there in 1809. In the same year, Lucy Colburn, Betsy Baker, and Abagail Colburn became members of the church; and in 1810 their number was added to by the admission of Monica Baker, Molly Ellis, and Hannah D. Smith.

The account of the formation of the church given on the first pages of its records, already quoted, continues the narrative in the following words: —

> The ministry of Revd Mr. Pecking, then officiating at Medfield, was blest to the awakening and conversion of many individuals. An attention more than was ever known before in this place was excited, so that in about two or three years several became savingly acquainted with the truth.

Mr. Pecking not continuing in Medfield for a short time no preaching was had, till the Revd Mr. Gammell came, in whom both Medfield and Dedham was united. He opened the present meeting-house on Thanksgiving day, November 18, 1810, and continued his labors in the two places alternately till 1823, when he left to take charge of the Baptist church in Newport, R.I. Under his ministry several were added to the church in Medfield, a number of whom resided in Dedham and other places.

After his removal the supply of preaching was very irregular till Revd S. Adlam came, who preached from May 1824 every alternate Sabbath, with little intermission, till the close of the year, when preaching was had every Sabbath. For several reasons it was thought advisable to have the members residing in and near Dedham formed into a separate church, upon which a council was called, who approved it, and after forming them into a church, ordained and installed S. Adlam over them. . . .

The first meeting of the society in West Dedham was held at the meeting-house on Monday, March 15, 1824, the meeting having been called by a justice of the peace at the request of a number of persons made to him for that purpose. Benjamin Colburn was chosen moderator, and Abijah Fisher clerk. The name of "the First Baptist Society in Dedham" was that given in the call for the meeting, and it became the name of the society. The following persons became members of the society during the year 1824:—

Benjamin Colburn,
Abijah Smith,
Phinehas Colburn,
Abijah Colburn,
Ebenezer Dean,
Eliphalet Colburn,
Robert Thompson,
Jabez Boyden,
Moses Everett,
Abijah Fisher,
Seth Gay,
Thacher Colburn,
Timothy Smith,
Isaac Colburn,
Jonathan Colburn,
Ellis Colburn,
Elisha Colburn,
David Baker,
Elisha Onion,
David Baker,
James Pettee,
Isaacus Colburn,
Seth Morse,
John Morse,
Joel Talbot,
Clement Bartlett,
Robert H. Baker,
William Perbeck,
Warren Colburn,
Nathaniel Colburn,
Dwight Colburn,
Alvan Colburn,

Ichabod Colburn,
Obed Baker,
Willard Draper,
Daniel Draper,
Andrew Lewis,
Moses Guild,
Calvin French, of Needham,
Moses Gay,
Sabin Turner.

During the next three years, the following persons also became members: —

Parker Wilson,
Sumner Richard,
Enoch Ellis,
Ebenezer Fisher,
Joseph Baker,
Aaron Baker,
Molly Fisher,
Spencer Fuller.

The number of those interested in the Baptist church and society had become large enough by the year 1824 to warrant the formation of a distinct church. The following request, signed by members of the Medfield church resident in West Dedham and its neighborhood, was accordingly prepared: —

To the Baptist Church in Medfield,

Beloved Brethren: Believing the time is come in which it will be for your comfort and our prosperity, and tend to the promoting of the Redeemer's cause, that we be constituted into a church by the name of the "First Baptist Church in Dedham;" we hereby request you would dismiss us who have hereunto set our names for the above purpose:

Abijah Fisher,
Polly Richards,
Cynthia Colburn,
Fanny Colburn,
Benjamin Colburn,
Abagail Colburn,
Monica Baker,
Mary Ellis,
Molly Russell,
Hannah Smith,
Betsy Colburn,
Lucy Colburn,
Cynthia Baker,
Deborah Gay,
Betsy Baker,
Hannah French,
Lucy Mason,
Molly Fisher,
Fanny Fisher,
Jabez Boyden,
Sally Thompson,
Nancy Everett,
Rene Morse,
Calvin French,
Lucy Colburn, 2d.

This request was granted by the Medfield church; and a meeting of those asking for dismission to form a new church was held Oct. 23, 1824, when Benjamin Colburn was chosen

moderator and Calvin French clerk. Articles of faith and a covenant were adopted. The Rev. Samuel Adlam was asked to take oversight of the church and to receive ordination. A council of churches and ministers assembled November 1, and formally constituted the new church and received it into fellowship. At the same time, Mr. Adlam was ordained, the sermon being preached by the Rev. Mr. Wayland.

In 1817, Mrs. Betsy Baker, wife of Obed Baker, and a member of the Medfield church, organized in her own house the first Sunday-school held in the town of Dedham. After several years, it met in the meeting-house; but there was no fire, and it did not assemble in the winter. In 1819, the number of children was thirty; and the attendance was from thirty to forty for many years. A Sunday-school library was started in 1826. Mrs. Baker was not only a woman of much piety, but of great energy. At about this time she had a desire to possess a leghorn bonnet, but was not able to procure one. She plucked straw in the fields with her own hands, bleached and braided it, and made a bonnet for her own use. She made bonnets for neighbors, improved upon the first attempt, and finally led the way to the building up of a large industry in Dedham and adjoining towns. Another member of the church, Miss Molly Fisher, built a parsonage in 1824, kept it in repair at her own expense, and gave it by will to the society on her death in 1837.

The church received large accessions to its membership in 1828, and again in 1832: in the former year, forty-one; and, in the latter, forty-four. The members of the church residing in Needham and Dover withdrew in 1838, to form a separate church. In 1843 the church dismissed sixteen of its members to form the Baptist church of East Dedham, and in 1858 it dismissed others to constitute the Baptist church of South Dedham (Norwood).

The Rev. Mr. Adlam remained with the church until 1827, when he was succeeded Jan. 3, 1828, by the Rev. Jonathan Aldrich, who remained until Feb. 27, 1830. Since

that time, the succession of ministers has been as follows: the Rev. Thomas Driver, May, 1830, to the autumn of 1838; the Rev. T. G. Freeman, from the spring of 1839 to April, 1841; the Rev. Joseph B. Damon, from Oct. 13, 1841, to October, 1843; the Rev. J. W. Parkhurst, from October, 1843, to Nov. 24, 1850; the Rev. Jeremiah Chaplain, from Nov. 24, 1850, to Sept. 6, 1858; the Rev. Benjamin W. Gardner, from Nov. 11, 1858, to Nov. 1, 1867; the Rev. I. J. Burgess, from Nov. 1, 1867, to Sept. 9, 1871; the Rev. Samuel J. Frost, from Sept. 15, 1872, to April 26, 1874; the Rev. S. C. Chandler, from Sept. 6, 1874, to Jan. 20, 1878; the Rev. T. M. Merriman, from April 6, 1879, to May 6, 1883; the Rev. E. S. Ufford, from June 28, 1883, to October, 1886; the Rev. O. P. Bessie, from November, 1886, to the present time.

With the exception of one or two years when first organized, the society has raised all moneys by subscription and by the renting of pews. In 1832, a vestry was built, which was enlarged a few years later. Land was bought in 1842 for enlarging the meeting-house yard. In the latter year, the church passed strong resolutions condemning slavery, and pledging the church to oppose it in every manner possible. The meeting-house was enlarged and repaired in 1834, at a cost of $1,403.73. In 1846, alterations were made in the galleries, and new pews built. The pew-owners, in 1852, sold their pews to the society at a nominal sum; and since then they have been rented annually. During this year, the meeting-house was painted, frescoed, and repaired, at a cost of $1,144.73; and repairs were also made in 1858 and in 1868. In 1873, a new bell was procured, at an expense of $649.70, which was obtained by the sale of the old bell and by subscriptions.

There was a brief period of trouble in the society in 1843, concerning the dismissal of the Rev. Mr. Damon; but, with this exception, the society and church have been harmonious and successful almost without interruption since their formation.

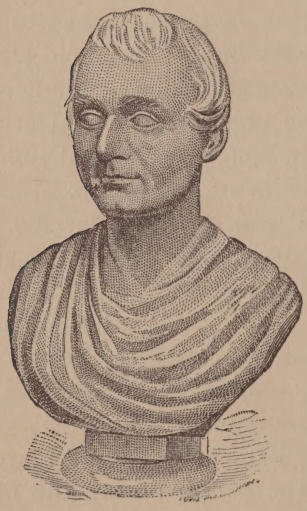
XI.

THE PARISH IN RECENT YEARS.

Beginning with the year 1814, when Mr. White was settled, the life of the Clapboard Trees parish was harmonious and peaceful. From that time to this, it has quietly pursued its way; and little has occurred in it that needs to be recorded. The population within the limits of the old territorial parish has probably never much exceeded five hundred persons, and farming has been the chief industry. During the first half of the century, a few small mechanical industries were carried on within the limits of the parish. Since then, two or three store-keepers and a dozen mechanics have found employment. The building of the Boston and Providence Railroad to the centre of the town, and the New York and New England Railroad through South Dedham, took away most of the mechanical industries of the village and many of its most enterprising citizens. The parish has become more strictly a farming community since then. Its business has lessened, and its population has not increased. Those families who gave life to the parish during the first half of the century have gradually disappeared or lessened in numbers, and there has been a gradual decrease in church attendance.

In 1814, the parish had $450 loaned on land securities, and notes of hand, signed by the original subscribers, to the amount of $1,482. This year it was "Voted, to ring the bell fifteen minutes, stop five minutes, and then toll; undertaken by Mr. Moses Kingsbury at $9.87 1-2." The roads through the meeting-house yard were built by the voluntary labors of the members of the parish. The farm of Mr. Thacher was rented at a vendue; and the parish paid for the rum and sugar furnished to the bidders and spectators on that occasion.

The collecting of the taxes at this period was given to the lowest bidder. The pews were rented for the year to the highest bidder. In 1816, the choir was paid $20, to be expended for its own benefit. A sum varying from $20 to $40 was paid to it for many years. In 1817, it was "Voted, to put the ringing of the bell, taking care of the meeting-house, to the lowest bidder, the house to be swept once in six weeks, and the stay to be taken off the bell in six weeks; undertaken by Jason Gay for $6.87." During this year, a social library was started in the parish.



W. Colburn

In 1795, the last entry was made on the parish records of the moneys received from the town for school purposes. At about this time, the town was divided into school districts; and the money went directly to these instead of to the parish. The number of schools continued the same, but the localities of the school-houses were somewhat changed. In the early part of the present century, the north school, or that in West Dedham village, was located opposite the house recently occupied by Erastus E. Gay. Later on, a house was built farther south, which was replaced on the same site by the Colburn School in 1874, at a cost of $12,000.

During the present century, the parish has had a number of its young men graduate at colleges. The best known of these is Warren Colburn, the author of *Elements of Intellectual Arithmetic*, even now one of the most widely circulated of text-books. It has been translated into many languages and sold extensively. He was born at Pond Plain, March 1, 1793, the son of Richard and Joana Col-

burn. The family afterward lived for six years at the Clapboard Trees, then removed to Lowell, where Warren became a machinist. He graduated at Harvard College in 1820, and the following year he published his *Intellectual Arithmetic*. He was for several years the superintendent of schools in Lowell. His death occurred Sept. 13, 1833, when he was forty years of age.

Dana P. Colburn was born in the parish Sept. 29, 1823, graduated at the Bridgewater Normal School, and in 1854 became the principal of the Rhode Island Normal School, which position he held until his death in 1859. His remains repose in the parish burial-ground. He was the author of various works on arithmetic, which would have had a wide and increasing circulation had the author lived.

Reuben A. Guild, the son of Deacon Reuben Guild, was born May 4, 1822, and graduated at Brown University in 1847. Immediately after graduation he became the assistant librarian at Brown University, and in 1848 librarian, which position he now holds, after forty years of continuous service. He has written much for the newspapers and magazines, and is the author of the *Librarian's Manual*, 1858; *Life, Times, and Correspondence of James Manning, First President of Brown University*, 1864; *History of Brown University*, 1867; *A Chaplain of the Revolution*, 1886. He is now engaged upon a work entitled *Life and Writings of Roger Williams, the Founder of Rhode Island*, which will be published in 1888.

John Richards and George Ellis were elected deacons June 7, 1810. John Richards, the son of John and Rebecca Richards, was born Jan. 24, 1755, and died June 11, 1841. He lived near Walpole Corner, where he was a farmer. He gave a considerable sum of money to the parish at his decease. George Ellis was born March 19, 1762, the son of Jonathan and Mary Ellis. His farm was at the south end of Pond Plain, and is now owned by Mr. Samuel F. Allen. He was a general of militia, and also an influential citizen. He died Jan. 26, 1849.

These men were succeeded, about the year 1840, by

Reuben Guild, who was born in the south parish Sept. 20, 1793. He settled in West Dedham village in 1816, when he bought the house and land since known as "the Guild place." He was for many years a blacksmith and carriage builder, and he also ran a line of stages to Dedham village. A Sunday-school was started by Mr. White about 1826, with a library. Deacon Guild was the superintendent for many years. In 1877, he joined the Baptist church; and he died in 1882. He has had no successor in the deacon's office.

Only two physicians have resided in the parish since its formation. The second of these was Dr. Francis Howe, who was born in Framingham, Sept. 26, 1787, moved to the parish in June, 1814, married Lucy Gay in 1818, and died May 18, 1859. For forty-five years, he was successful in his profession, and was a useful and respected member of the parish.

About the middle of the last century a tavern was built in West Dedham. It was located on what is now High Street, which was then or somewhat later the line of the Boston and Hartford stage. It was also patronized by the farmers, who carried their produce to market in Boston from the towns farther south. From about 1760, it was kept for many years by Abner Ellis, the son of Deacon Joseph Ellis. He was succeeded by Col. Abner Ellis, his son, who was born Jan. 4, 1770, and who died Dec. 14, 1844. He was a representative to the General Court in 1814–15, and again in 1823. His daughter Mary married Theodore Gay, by whom he was succeeded. Opposite the tavern was the training-ground, where the militia met for their drills and reviews previous to 1840, when training-day was abolished. This was for a long period the scene of an annual merry-making, which attracted a large number of people. The numerous military titles which appear in the history of the parish attest to the interest which was taken in its military organizations, which seem to have been kept up with skill and promptitude.

The parish clerk in 1841–42 was Theodore Gay, who succeeded Col. Abner Ellis as the tavern-keeper. When the

West Dedham post-office was established in 1824, he became the postmaster, which office he held until 1879, when he was succeeded by Charles H. Ellis. After the railroads had taken away the stage routes, the tavern was given up, and a grocery store was kept in the same building, which was burned in the spring of 1887. Mr. Gay was a colonel of militia, and he was long familiarly known as "Colonel Thody." He died in 1881, in his eighty-eighth year. Lusher Gay was parish clerk from 1843 to 1848, Charles Ellis in 1849, and Merrill D. Ellis from 1850 to 1872. The latter was a representative from 1841 to 1843, and he was a selectman for many years. John D. Whiting was parish clerk from 1873 to 1879, and Erastus E. Gay from 1880 to his death in 1887. In July, 1887, George Albert French was elected to the office. Joseph Fisher was the treasurer of the parish from 1846 to 1876, and he was for many years a very liberal contributor to its financial support. He took a zealous interest in the affairs of the parish, contributed liberally for repairing the meeting-house, paid the deficit on the new organ, and did much else to keep the parish in a successful condition. Erastus E. Gay also took a devoted interest in the affairs of the parish, and contributed most liberally of his money and time in its behalf.

At the March meeting in 1804, a committee was selected to build a hearse, and a suitable house in which it might be kept. In that year, George Ellis was paid $40 for building a hearse-house, Eliphalet Baker giving the land on which it was built, Benjamin Fisher $61 for a hearse and harness, and Aaron Baker $1 for a lock and fixing the same to the burying-ground gate. In 1805, Aaron Baker was paid $3 for a bier for the use of the parish. In 1813, a committee was appointed to see about the enlargement of the burying-ground, and to invite the Baptist society to aid in so doing. The treasurer's accounts do not afford any evidence that land was purchased at this time, and yet it may have been bought by a general subscription. In 1820, however, land was bought of Sabin Baker, to enlarge it to the south, for

which he was paid $13. In 1837, a committee was appointed to confer with the other society with reference to building a tomb in the burying-ground. In 1859, the two societies joined in repairing the hearse and the public tomb. Additions of land were made by purchase in 1843 and in 1860. The two parishes held a fair in 1843, and the proceeds were devoted to fencing the cemetery. The whole sum expended at this time was about $1,100. A piece of land to the east was purchased, and the grounds were greatly improved.

In 1821, a committee, consisting of George Ellis, Col. Abner Ellis, and Lusher Gay, was appointed for the purpose of giving certificates agreeable to the act of the Commonwealth respecting worship and religious freedom, passed June 18, 1811. This act of 1811 was a practical breaking down of the old parish system of church administration, and permitted people to pay freely for that kind of religion which they preferred. The old method of taxation for church support was continued, but it gradually grew less efficient until it was abolished. Under this act, a person wishing to change his tax from one church to another had simply to state his purpose in writing to the clerk of the parish with which he had been connected.

About $300 to $350 were raised at this time each year, for paying the minister and for the contingent expenses of the parish. The receipts from pew-rents were about $150 annually. In 1826, this vote was passed: "Voted, that an organ be admitted into the meeting-house, on condition that it shall be taken out before it becomes any expense to the parish, and the meeting-house put in repair." The parish records afford no evidence that an organ was procured at this time. The same year a committee was appointed to report on the utility and expense of lowering the pulpit; and the next year the committee was given the right to lower it, if the expense did not exceed $25.

In 1828, the changing of the psalm-books was referred to a committee of nine, who reported that it was inexpedient. The following was passed at the parish meeting: "Voted, that the people of color have the southeast pew in the gal-

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lery," which was the one nearest the door and the farthest from the pulpit.

The parish committee, in 1829, was instructed to inform the town that the meeting-house could be had for town meetings when it was desired for that purpose. For a number of years, the town meeting went about to the different parishes; and it was several times held in the Clapboard Trees meeting-house. In 1830, a committee of seven was chosen to spend $25 in lowering the pulpit, that work not having been done in 1826. The sum paid for the care of the meeting-house had gradually risen to $16 in 1831, which was the amount paid for several succeeding years.

On the first Wednesday in June, 1831, the Female Benevolent Society was organized, with eighty members. The meeting was held at the house of Mr. White; and Mrs. White was made the president, an office which she held continuously for twenty-six years. This society was organized to advance the general welfare of the parish, to promote its social life, and to facilitate and increase its benevolent work. It has since that time been the most active organization connected with the parish, and it has contributed more money than any other for advancing parish interests. During the first fifty years of its existence, it raised $3,581.54, which it spent as follows: for the help of the poor and as gifts to individuals, $1,122.34; for the repairing of the meeting-house, $577.68; for the parish library, $452.76; for the purchase of an organ, $811.70; for the improvement of the cemetery, $617.06. Since 1881, this society has contributed $409.63 towards the repairing of the church; and it has provided the meeting-house with new cushions at an expense of about $150. To the building of the parsonage in 1885, the society contributed $200. In 1881, the society celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its organization with a meeting in Colburn Hall, when the Rev. C. S. Locke gave an historical address. He said: "Much of the success of the society was due to Mrs. White's energy and organizing and executive ability. The first vice-president was Mrs. Polly Gay, and the first treasurer Miss Mary Ellis, who

was married to Mr. Theodore Gay in 1833, and, under the name of Mary E. Gay, continued as treasurer till 1869, holding the office thirty-eight years. The presidents after Mrs. White have been Mrs. Anne Locke, Mrs. Lucy Howe, Mrs. L. P. K. Gifford, Miss M. E. Pettee, Mrs. Crowninshield, Mrs. Mary E. Fisher, Mrs. Lucy N. Cooke, and Mrs. George Fisher; and the vice-presidents since Mrs. Gay have been Miss Sally Gay, Mrs. Susan D. Ellis, Mrs. Lucy Howe, Mrs. Mary E. Fisher, Miss Pettee, Miss Howe, Mrs. F. Copeland, Mrs. Charles French, and Mrs. Albert Gay; and the treasurers who have succeeded Mrs. Gay are Mrs. Caroline Ellis, Mrs. George Fisher, Miss Caroline Howe, and Mrs. William Colburn. The society was reorganized in 1869 [when it became the *Ladies'* Benevolent Society], and it adopted a constitution and by-laws. Since that time, Mrs. Fannie Draper has been the secretary."

In 1833, the Hon. Joshua Fisher, of Beverly, who was born in the parish, left the sum of $3,000 in his will, to be added to the ministerial fund. In 1836, the value of this fund was $5,252.82. This so far increased the receipts of the parish that for many years the sum raised for ministerial and contingent expenses was only $175. In 1838, the parish passed a vote of thanks to the unknown donor of a new bell, who subsequently proved to be Deacon John Richards. In 1839, Calvin F. Ellis, Rev. John White, Colburn Ellis, Richard Ellis, and Doctor Francis Howe were a committee to procure one hundred and fifty psalm books, two to be put in each pew below, one in each pew in the gallery, and the rest to be reserved for the use of the singers. The book selected was Greenwood's Collection of Hymns.

In 1853, the Rev. Francis LeBaron was invited to become the pastor of the society; but he declined. In July, 1854, the Rev. Richard Metcalf, of Providence, received a call to the vacant pastorate; but he also declined. The Rev. Calvin S. Locke was invited in October; and December 6 he began his connection with the parish, receiving ordination on that day. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Oliver Stearns, of Hingham; and the Rev. Dr. Morison, the Rev.

Dr. Lamson, and the Rev. F. D. Huntington took part in the service. During this pastorate, the custom of giving the minister a vacation in the summer began, Mr. Locke having made a request for it in his letter of acceptance.

In 1855, the meeting-house was repaired by subscription, and at an expense of $1,230.30. The committee having charge of the repairs consisted of Colburn Ellis, Joseph Crane, Lusher G. Baker, Tyler Thayer, and Caleb Ellis. "The floor was raised," says Mr. Locke; "a lower and more elegant pulpit was substituted for the old one, and the scattered, uncomfortable, and uncomely pews were exchanged for the concentric seats, which both bring the members of the congregation nearer one another and face to face with the minister; the bare walls and ceilings were handsomely frescoed; and it is worthy of note that these repairs were accomplished without the alienation of a single member, and that they gave general satisfaction. The Ladies' Benevolent Society carpeted, cushioned, and otherwise furnished the church, at an expense of $577.68. At the same time, *Hymns for Church of Christ* was substituted for Greenwood's collection." While the church was being repaired, the meetings for worship were held in Nahatan Hall, which was in a house situated a little west of the meeting-house, and for many years used as a parsonage. This was through all the middle period of the century, and probably from early in the century, the principal social gathering place of the parish. It was burned in 1879. Mr. Locke says of this house and hall: "This house formerly stood on the south side of Nahatan Street, and was reached by a lane from Clapboard-Trees Street. Nahatan Hall was connected with it, and was used without charge by the owner for the fairs, social gatherings, and ladies' meetings of the parish. It is a legend about this house that Moll Pitcher, an uncanny woman from Lynn, once stopped at it, and asked for a drink of cider. Being refused, she said, 'Your neck will snap like this,' at the same time breaking the stem of her clay pipe. Shortly after, the man fell and broke his neck. It was also predicted that the house would be destroyed by fire." In 1857,

the organ which had been used in the first parish meeting-house since 1821 was purchased, and was opened on July 12.

Mr. Locke severed his connection with the parish June 20, 1864. During and since his pastorate, Mr. Locke preached and published the following sermons, which have an intimate connection with the history of the parish: on the death of Mrs. Olive Morse Guild (wife of Deacon Guild), 1858; "The Patriotic Volunteer," at the funeral of George F. Whiting, 1862; on the death of Newell Fisher, 1862; "Other Men have Labored," a history of the parish, preached after the burning of the church records, 1879.

At the beginning of his ministry, Mr. Locke bought the house once owned by the Rev. Thomas Thacher. He followed in the ways of his predecessors, and took boys into his house to prepare them for college. After his resignation, he established a boarding and day school in his house.

In 1865, the old parish territorial organization having entirely disappeared, it became desirable to know who were the members of the parish. A very brief paper was drawn up, entered on the clerk's records, and those wishing to act with the parish signed their names to it. This statement here follows, together with the names of those who have signed it: —

We, the subscribers of the third parish in Dedham, hereby declare ourselves to be members of said parish.

Joseph Fisher,
James Pettee,
Edward Sumner,
Sam. F. Allen,
Henry L. Pettee,
F. Copeland,
Moses Kingsbury,
Caleb Smith,
Reuben Hunting,
John D. Ellis,
Rufus French,
John C. Nash,
Samuel Cheney,
Joseph Crane,
Joshua Fisher,
Caleb Ellis,
Calvin S. Locke,
J. W. Gay,
Warren Covell,
John E. Whiting,
Charles French,
George D. Draper,
Daniel W. Parker,
Reuben Guild,
Nathan Phillips,
Theodore Gay,
Francis W. Baker,
Merrill D. Ellis,
Erastus E. Gay,
James A. Gay,

Ellis Gay,	Hattie S. Fisher,
George M. French,	Mrs. Albert Gay,
Asa Fisher,	Mrs. H. Gay,
William Colburn,	Mrs. Percy Tisdale,
Jabez Fisher,	Maria Pettee,
John Morgan,	Harriet Pettee,
G. A. French,	Mrs. Geo. French,
B. F. White,	Henrietta L. French,
Mary E. Fisher,	Jas. M. Ellis,
Mrs. B. F. White,	Percy E. Tisdale.

The parish came into possession, in 1865, of $11,000, left to it in the will of Lusher Gay, who was born Aug. 28, 1803, and who died June 15, 1855. He had been a life-long member of the congregation, and greatly interested in its affairs.

The Rev. A. W. Stevens was, in 1865, invited to become the pastor; but he declined. From May, 1866, to May, 1867, the pulpit was supplied by the Rev. Henry Westcott, who was born in the town of Warwick, R.I., in 1831, graduated at Brown University, studied theology at Cambridge, and was settled at Barre in 1860. In 1867, he was settled at Lexington, where he remained fourteen years. In 1881, he removed to Melrose, and preached to that and the Malden parishes until his death, July 14, 1883. In 1884, a volume containing fourteen of his sermons, a brief biographical sketch, and the funeral tributes, was edited and privately published by his wife.

In 1866, the parish library was formed. In 1870, it was made an adjunct of the parish, and officers were chosen at the parish meeting. Warren Covell was elected trustee, and John Whiting librarian. An excellent collection of valuable books was secured, which was much used until a branch of the public library was established.

The Rev. Elisha Gifford became the pastor in 1867, beginning his connection with the parish on the third Sunday of September. In 1869 occurred the first break in the order of two services, morning and afternoon. At the parish meeting, it was voted that the services should be held at 10.30 A.M. and 2 P.M., except in July and August, when there

should be a service in the morning only, with three Sundays in August and one in the winter for vacation. In 1870, it was voted to have no service the first two Sundays of August, no afternoon service in July and August, and the parish committee was authorized to dispense with the afternoon service on stormy days. In a year or two more, the afternoon service was discontinued. Mr. Gifford gave up his connection with the parish June 15, 1872.

At about this time, the church ordinances were discontinued, and the church ceased to exist. Probably from 1865, when the parish was reorganized, it became the sole perpetuator of the life of the old church and parish.

Jan. 1, 1873, the Rev. Edward Crowninshield became the pastor. In 1877, a new organ was procured, which was paid for by the sale of the old one, a contribution of $811.70 by the Ladies' Benevolent Society, and about $200 given by Joseph Fisher. In June, 1879, the house which had been used for many years as a minister's house, owned by Joseph Fisher, was burned. It accidentally caught fire on the morning Mr. Crowninshield had expected to remove from it, and many of his goods were burned.

Mr. Crowninshield was born in Marblehead in 1840. His opportunities for an education were limited, and he worked for some years as a shoemaker. He took the course at the Harvard Divinity School, and was settled at Exeter, N.H., where he remained for only about one year. In 1879, he went from West Dedham to Belfast, Me., where he remained until his death, which occurred Feb. 6, 1883. In a notice of him, his classmate, the Rev. N. P. Gilman, said: —

> Mr. Crowninshield's character was so admirably simple, duplicity, doubleness of any kind, was so foreign to him, that fuller knowledge only confirmed the first strong impression of liking and respect which he invariably made. . . .
>
> Neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, by circumstances he was a prophetic soul, a born preacher of righteousness. With an aristocratic name, he was a son of the people, and honored the name, more than fortune or rank could have done, by exalted character and rich devotion to the kingdom of God. Of that kingdom he had the strenuous and radical conceptions which hardly fail those who fight their way to light. His manly living justified his creed.

Among Mr. Crowninshield's intimate friends were the Rev. W. C. Gannett and the Rev. John W. Chadwick. The former wrote many pages of his admirable biography of his father while staying at the Clapboard Trees parsonage. In the *Christian Register*, Mr. Chadwick paid this tribute to the memory of his friend: —

A sudden cold had fastened on some seat of chronic ailment. Then there was general implication of the whole system, and at the last some days of fiery pain. Desiring almost passionately to recover for the sake of his family, so dependent on his support and sympathy, and that he might carry on his work, he was nevertheless able to cope with the inevitable event with a courageous heart. . . .

He was settled first in Exeter, N.H.; and his hopes were high, and all omens seemed auspicious. . . . West Dedham was his Wartburg, his Arabia, his quiet place for gathering up his strength and clearing his self-consciousness. His house and church were near together on such a heaven-kissing hill as not many towns in Massachusetts have to show. The landscape upon which he looked abroad was calculated to enlarge his mind, and had its natural operation. But to this he added much reading and study of good books. . . . When he had left West Dedham and gone to Belfast, I had a better opportunity to note the features of his mind than I had had before. Many of his sermons were printed in the local papers and in the *True Religion*. And then I saw how much the quiet, meditative life on the West Dedham hill had done for him. His thought had grown immeasurably fuller and deeper, and his expression of it clearer and firmer in a like degree. . . . His aptitude was for practical rather than for speculative themes. He interpreted his ministerial function as an instrument of social reformation. Problems of education and political science had for him commanding interest, and he brought to them a fine illumination. . . .

The top and crown of his rejoicing was his domestic life. His most passionate ambition ever was to give his children such an education as would fit them for some honorable and useful station in the world. . . . In all personal relations, he seemed to me most generous and loyal. For the ties of kinship he had great regard. A more filial and paternal spirit it has not been my lot to know.

During several months in 1879 and 1880, the pulpit was supplied by the Rev. George W. Hosmer, D.D. The Rev. George W. Cooke began his connection with the parish Dec 1, 1880; and he resigned June 13, 1887. In 1883, the meeting-house was struck by lightning and seriously dam-

aged. The clerk wrote this account of it in the parish records: —

WEST DEDHAM, Friday, April 20, 1883

The church of the Unitarian society and of the third parish in Dedham was this day struck by a bolt of lightning of unusual power and force. The church was almost lifted from its foundations, and was very badly shattered and all but one window more or less broken. It was visited on the next two days, Saturday and Sunday, as estimated, by more than two thousand persons; and it was agreed by all to be the most wonderful display of the power of a lightning bolt ever seen in this vicinity.

The society held Sunday services on the two following Sabbaths in Colburn Hall, and on the third Sabbath, May 6, in the Baptist church, the use of which had been kindly offered them by the parish committee of the Baptist society, and continued there until July 1, when the annual summer vacation was commenced, one month earlier than usual, on account of sickness and affliction in the family of Mr. Cooke, the pastor of the society. Services commenced in the church after the repairs were completed, September 12.

The repairs made at this time included the painting of the meeting-house outside and in, the frescoing of the interior, new carpets and new cushions in 1886. The work was efficiently superintended by the clerk, E. E. Gay; and the whole expenditure was $1,511.18. Since the completion of these repairs, the meeting-house presents as attractive and tasteful an interior as can be found in any country church in the State.

At the parish meeting of 1884, a committee, consisting of the Rev. C. S. Locke, B. F. White, and Joseph L. Fisher, was appointed to take into consideration the advisability of building a parsonage, and to report methods of operation to that effect. At a special meeting, it was decided to build; and George Fisher, Charles French, George Kingsbury, George M. French, Lusher G. Baker, Miss Hattie Fisher, and Mrs. Kate White were appointed a committee to purchase a lot and to erect a house. Work was begun in the autumn of 1884; and the house was completed early in July, 1885, when Mr. Cooke immediately moved into it. The cost of land and the erection of the house was about $3,500. The house was located on High Street, opposite Gay, and on land purchased of Lusher and Granville Baker.

On the 10th of January, 1886, the parish observed the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its legal existence. The night preceding was very stormy, and it was found on Sunday morning that the meeting-house could not be occupied. The few who braved the weather met in Colburn Hall, when Mr. Cooke preached a sermon, in which he described the formation of the parish and the building up of the congregation and church under the first minister. On the following Sunday, the commemorative service was held in the meeting-house; and an historical discourse was given concerning the second minister and the parish in the Revolution. Neighboring ministers were present, and brief addresses were made. In June, Mr. Cooke continued the history of the parish with two sermons on the parish under its third and fourth ministers.

In 1887, the trustees of the ministerial fund reported that the whole amount of the fund was $15,606.61, and the debts of the parish were $2,600.